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**Behind the Cowboy
struggle to reach
Super Bowl XIII**

**The SPORT interview:
Howard Cosell**

**The shocking inequities
and hypocrisy of the NCAA**

**College football playoffs?
The players sound off!**

**Sonny Werblin, sport's
wiliest wheeler-dealer**

**NFL centers:
The stars nobody knows**



Cowboy Harvey Martin
sacking Cardinal Jim Hart



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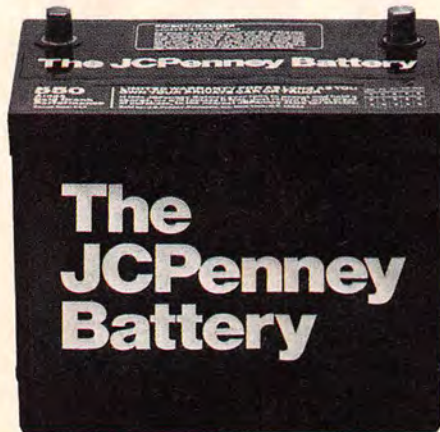
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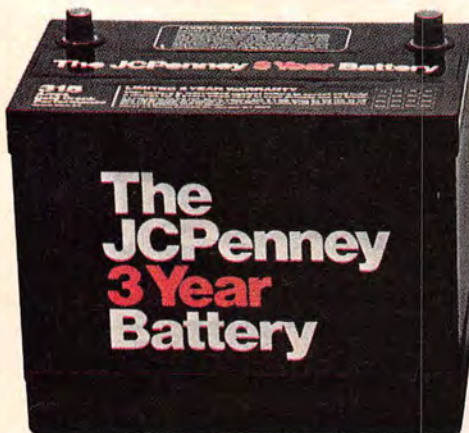
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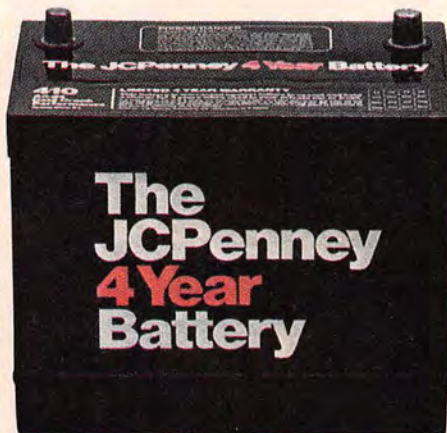


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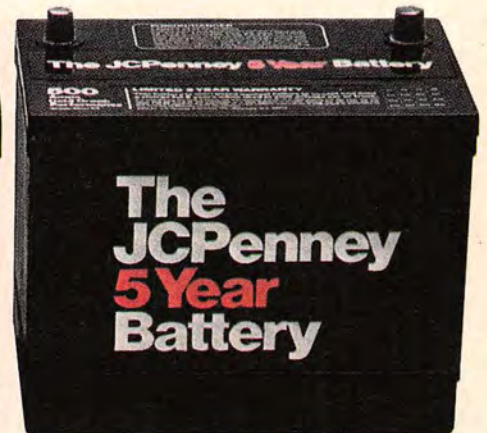


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Sonny Werblin shelled out millions to rebuild the Knicks and Rangers. Then, to upgrade his boxing program, he signed on wily Don King, but told him: "Don't try to hustle a hustler"

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Walter Davis profoundly misses his family and friends in North Carolina, but that didn't keep him from winning NBA Rookie-of-the-Year honors

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The trouble started when our ersatz bowler entered the U.S. Open tournament and the pros got a mite testy. Said one: "If I find that guy, it's gonna be him and me"

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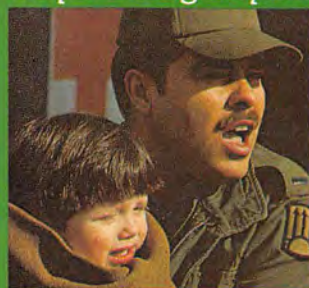
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QUARTERBACK QUIBBLES

I enjoyed "Rating the NFL quarterbacks" (November) a lot. But I was surprised when I read that Roger Staubach was the champion. The panelists gave him 22 points for play-calling, yet Staubach doesn't call the plays—coach Tom Landry does. Staubach just carries out orders as he did in the Navy. If you subtract those 22 points, he would be tied for fifth with Ken Stabler—which is just about where he belongs.

Leo Gass
Ashland, Mont.

I think Larry Felser's article on "Rating the NFL quarterbacks" was dumb. Ken Stabler and Terry Bradshaw are without a doubt the best. Ken Anderson is washed out, Bert Jones is a baby and Dan Pastorini doesn't know what "big game" means.

John Mark Graham
Gadsden, Ala.

In your quarterback story you stated that Craig Morton was the only active quarterback not rated in your top ten who started a Super Bowl. Well, the last time I took a look at the Washington Redskins' sideline, Billy Kilmer still seemed ready and able to play.

Marc Krasner
Potomac, Md.

Editor's Reply: A penalty on SPORT for overlooking the 1972 Super Bowl—when the Miami Dolphins beat the Washington Redskins.

DEFYING GRAVITY

Peter Goldman's article on "Gravity's outlaw" (November) was fantastic. I have read so many articles about money and glamour, but this one showed realistic problems—which made the story of Earl Manigault all the more interesting.

Larry McKain
Pittsburgh, Pa.

The story on Earl Manigault was an insult to the man, the legend, the Harlem community, the sport of basketball and your magazine. To allow Peter Goldman to write with such blatant ignorance, not to mention a cold and feelingless style, is unbelievable. One gets the impression that Earl is nothing more than a two-bit dope addict, rather than the exceptional talent and innovator that he actually was. He was so much a part of a culture and time, one would rather see him rot away in

a cell than have him displayed like this.

Sam Kass
Brooklyn, N.Y.

CLARK SPARKS

I'd like to thank you for that magnificent article on Jack Clark ("Clark the Spark," November). The Giants are my favorite baseball team and I think they are gifted to have Jack Clark on their team. After a rough year in 1977, he pulled through and proved himself.

Mario Murillo
Levittown, N.Y.

QUIZ-ERR

In Question 8 of the November SPORT Quiz, you stated that what Joe Namath and Johnny Unitas did *not* have in common was starting a Super Bowl game. The fact is, they *do* have that in common. Namath, of course, started in the famous Super Bowl III of 1969, and Unitas started in Super Bowl V, but was replaced by Earl Morrall after being injured by Dallas linebacker Chuck Howley.

Charley Wilson
Peekskill, N.Y.

GRADING GUIDRY

Your "Pressure points" article on Ron Guidry (October) was exceptional. He is the only thing that kept the volatile Yankees together. He took the pressure of an entire season on his own back and managed to beat it!

John DeMartino
Address withheld

You say that Ron Guidry throws his fastball at 92 mph. This is wrong; Guidry's fastball has been clocked at better than 95 mph. This is really incredible speed for a pitcher who is so small.

Michele Acito
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Ron Guidry certainly deserves all the awards and headlines he is getting for a truly remarkable season, but his performance should not overshadow all other pitchers. Please do not ignore Mike Caldwell of the Milwaukee Brewers, who won the second most games (22) in baseball last season.

John Lancaster
Dallas, Tex.

Letters To SPORT
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SPORT TALK

ILL WIND IN BOSTON

Recently we were chatting with this column's resident Answer Man, Boston pitcher Bill Lee, about the American League East playoff game which the Red Sox lost to the New York Yankees last October 2. In the eighth inning of that all-important game, the Sox, trailing by a run, went to their bench and sent up the over-aged and underused (94 at-bats last season) Bob Bailey as a pinch-hitter. As Lee sat in the bullpen and watched Bailey strike out on three pitches, Bill thought to himself: "There's a Bernie Carbo wind blowing out at Fenway this inning."

Carbo—the pinch-hitting hero of the 1975 World Series against the Cincinnati Reds (two late-inning homers)—had been sold by the Sox to the Cleveland Indians on the June 15 trading deadline last season.

Carbo, it turned out, had been watching the game and thinking the same thing as his buddy Lee. "I like those hard-throwing righties [the Yankee pitcher was Rich Gosage], especially on those windy days at Fenway," Carbo said with a grim laugh when we relayed Lee's thoughts to him. "I could almost feel myself in that batter's box." Another laugh. "But if it had been me, you can believe I wouldn't have taken a third strike like Bailey did. I wouldn't have been able to face my teammates after doing that. But I wouldn't have had to. I would've been swinging from the dugout steps."

That wasn't all that Carbo had to say about his former team. When we asked why the Sox blew a 14-game lead, he said, "I'll tell you why they blew it—simply lousy management. Not only did the front office dump me for nothing last year, they also dumped Ferguson Jenkins, Reggie Cleveland, Rick Miller and Rick Wise. All these guys would've been invaluable coming down the stretch. Remember when they had to use a rookie pitcher, Bob . . . uh, what's his name [Sprowl]? And remember when Dwight Evans got hurt and they had to use Jim Rice out there in rightfield? Rick Miller is probably the best outfielder in the game, and he could've been there. [Miller played out his option in 1977 and signed with California, but Carbo said the Red Sox's front office drove him away by failing to offer him a decent contract.]

"The front office got rid of the guys whose personalities they didn't like . . . the free spirits, the guys who spoke their minds. So blame the front office, not the players. Hell, guys like Carl Yastrzemski and [Carlton] Pudge Fisk were as pissed

as I was. What Bill Lee did by that one-day walkout when I was sold the others *wanted* to do."

Carbo also doesn't blame the much-abused manager, Don Zimmer. "Zimmie's just a good owner's man who won't go to the wall for a player against the management's wishes. But when you have people like the Red Sox have in the front office, *someone* has to draw the line." Carbo comes down heaviest on Haywood Sullivan, the Sox's rookie executive vice-president and general manager last season. "When they fired Dick O'Connell [the previous GM] in 1977, they lost a top-notch baseball guy, a guy who didn't care about personalities. But Sullivan started making a clean sweep of the players who had their own minds. He wanted yes-men around." Carbo laughed again. "I just watched New York win a World Series with guys Sullivan wouldn't want around."

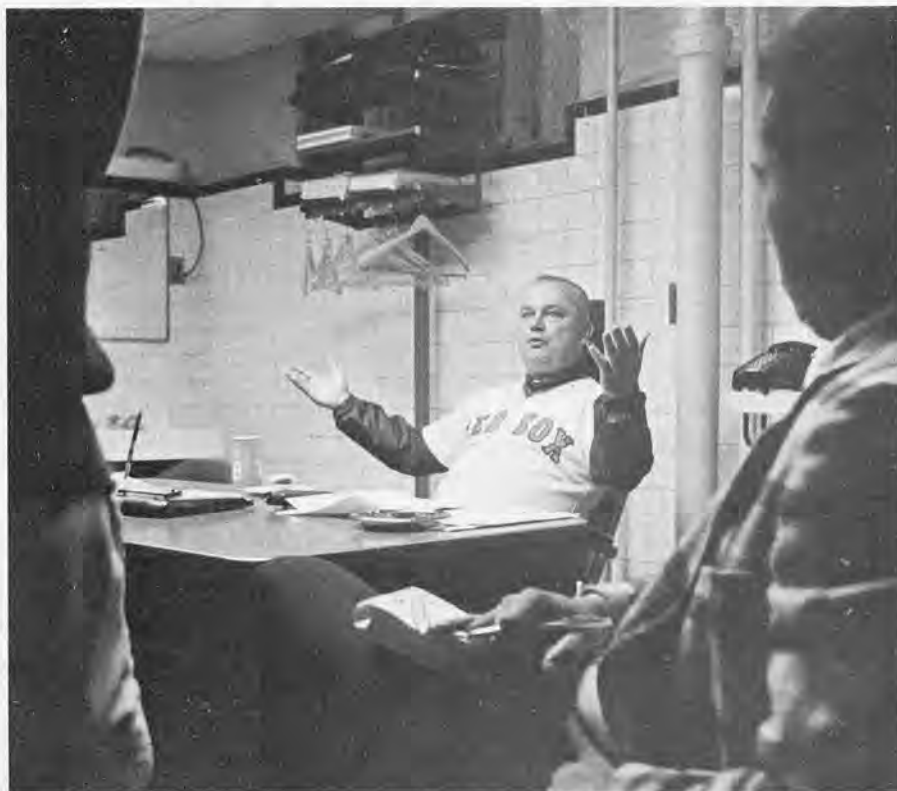
Carbo said the men Sullivan "dumped" were known to be outspoken, and in Jenkins' case it was his alleged insubordination—refusing to enter a lopsided game in 1977 after not being used in crucial ones—that supposedly caused his sale to the Texas Rangers. "They treated a

great old pro and a great gentleman like a little boy—and they may have blown a pennant in 1977 by doing it," Carbo said. "Maybe they blew two pennants when you consider that Fergie won 18 games for Texas last year."

When Carbo learned his own fate in June, he said, "It shocked the hell out of me. I asked Sullivan what he got for me and he said, 'Oh, about 15 grand.' Which was like saying, 'Nothing.' Buddy LeRoux [the club's vice-president] was shocked too. Sullivan had told him he was working out a trade for me. He kept Buddy in the dark the whole time."

Carbo paused. "I just hope Sullivan's happy. He got a little bit of money by selling the team's depth—and its soul. Now I hear Bill Lee and Bill Campbell are going, and that Jim Rice may play out his option because he feels as unwanted as Rick Miller did. I tell you, I feel sorry for those Boston fans. They're the best in the world, but every year they have to see that team go down the tubes. Still, I would've sat and just pinch-hit for those fans. I was a loyal Red Sox man." Another pause. "The way

Continued on page 92



Don Zimmer took flak for Boston's swoon, but Bernie Carbo blames the front office.

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SPORT QUIZ

GRADE YOURSELF

18-20 EXCELLENT

15-17 VERY GOOD

12-14 FAIR

1. Who is the only quarterback to play in four Super Bowl games?

- a. Fran Tarkenton
- b. Earl Morrall
- c. Craig Morton
- d. Roger Staubach

2. Name the four Heisman Trophy winners who also played in a Super Bowl.

3. Which quarterback holds the Super Bowl record for the fewest passes intercepted on 25 or more attempts?

- a. Bart Starr
- b. Bob Griese
- c. Joe Namath

4. True or False: Mercury Morris is the only player ever to return a punt or kickoff for a touchdown in a Super Bowl game.

5. Match these players with the two Super Bowl teams they played on:

- a. Marv Fleming **1.** Green Bay-Dallas
- b. Herb Adderley **2.** Oakland-Minn.
- c. Mike Eischeid **3.** Green Bay-Miami

6. The Dallas Cowboys hold the Super Bowl single-game record for the most:

- a. points
- b. times sacked
- c. quarterback sacks

7. Which Oakland Raider holds the AFC record for most receptions (nine) in a conference championship game?

- a. Cliff Branch
- b. Dave Casper
- c. Fred Biletnikoff
- d. Mike Siani

8. Which team has lost the most confer-

ence championship games?

- a. New York Giants
- b. Oakland Raiders
- c. Los Angeles Rams

9. Name the team that has won three of the five different college bowl games it has played in the last five years.

10. Which is the only team to appear in the same major bowl game more than five consecutive times?

- a. Nebraska
- b. Ohio State
- c. Texas

11. Who was the last quarterback to win the Heisman Trophy?

- a. Pat Sullivan
- b. Archie Manning
- c. Jim Plunkett

12. Since 1968, which is the only college to go undefeated in the regular season yet lose a postseason bowl game three times?

- a. Michigan
- b. Texas
- c. Alabama

13. Who beat Bucky Dent for the American League Rookie of the Year award in 1974?

- a. Frank Tanana
- b. Mike Hargrove
- c. George Brett
- d. Ron LeFlore

14. Which team had the most shutouts (19) and hit the most home runs (173) last season?

- a. Dodgers
- b. Red Sox
- c. Orioles
- d. Brewers

15. Who was the only player to hit more

than 15 home runs and have less than 50 RBIs last season?

- a. Dave Revering
- b. Lee Mazzilli
- c. Gene Tenace

16. Who was the last National League pitcher before Craig Swan to win the ERA title with less than ten victories?

- a. Buzz Capra
- b. Stu Miller
- c. Bob Friend
- d. John Denny

17. Match last year's NBA rookies with the category in which they finished in the top ten:

- a. Walter Davis **1.** assists
- b. Norm Nixon **2.** scoring
- c. Wayne Rollins **3.** field goal pct.
- d. Bernard King **4.** blocked shots

18. Who is the only player besides Wilt Chamberlain and David Thompson to score over 70 points in an NBA game?

- a. Elgin Baylor
- b. Pete Maravich
- c. Rick Barry

19. Which player led the NBA in offensive rebounds (380) last season?

- a. Truck Robinson
- b. Moses Malone
- c. Marvin Webster

20. Whose Boston Bruin record for most penalty minutes in a season (211) did Terry O'Reilly break last season?

- a. Ted Green
- b. Wayne Cashman
- c. Mike Milbury

FOR ANSWERS TURN TO PAGE 91



Ted Green (6)



Wayne Cashman



Mike Milbury

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The World Series MVP



On a hard-hitting Yankee team, a light-hitting shortstop emerged as the best all-round performer in the fall classic

Yankee president Al Rosen called him "the epitome of pinstripes." And baseball commissioner Bowie Kuhn called his World Series performance "heroic."

But after hearing those accolades, Bucky Dent stepped to the podium in the Grand Ballroom of the Plaza Hotel to accept the Commissioner's Trophy as Major League Baseball and SPORT Magazine's World Series Most Valuable Player (the first time in 24 years it has been jointly given) and he brushed aside thoughts of personal glory. Speaking to over 500 guests—including American League president Lee MacPhail and the master of ceremonies, ABC-TV sportscaster Keith



Commissioner Bowie Kuhn presents Bucky Dent (top) with Major League Baseball and SPORT Magazine's World Series MVP Award for Dent's "heroics" in the Yankees' second straight championship. Dent hit .417 with seven RBIs.

Series MVP

Jackson—Dent reflected on the Yankees' recently completed Series victory over the Los Angeles Dodgers and found that of greater significance than his performance. "The other 25 guys on my team are the MVPs," he said. "They showed this year what athletes are really made of. After this, other clubs will get behind and say, 'Look at the '78 Yankees.' "

The Yankees had come back from a deficit of 14 games in mid-July to win their second straight championship. It was the greatest resurgence in American League history. But most Yankees agreed they couldn't have done it one year ago.

A year ago, the very singular slugger of the Yankees, Reggie Jackson, had won the Series MVP Award, culminating a year of bickering and team turmoil that—despite winning the championship—had left a bad taste in many of the quieter Yankees' mouths, including Dent's.

"Last year at the end of the season I was very happy to go home," Dent said at a press conference with his wife Karen, following the luncheon and prior to accepting the keys to a 1979 Ford Turbo Mustang from SPORT Publisher Thomas A. Wolf. "I felt like somebody had lifted a million pounds of pressure off me. It wasn't a fun year.

"This year it was fun. The team grew more together. It's possible that Bob Lemon [who replaced Billy Martin as manager on July 25 when the fourth-place Yankees were ten and a half games behind Boston] put that touch of class, that quietness into us. Bob made everybody feel like they were part of the ballclub."

Dent became an everyday part of the ballclub on July 31, when he reentered the starting lineup following a series of injuries. But, he admitted, he was sometimes bothered by Lemon's penchant for getting everybody into the game. Dent frequently was lifted in the late innings for a pinch-hitter.

"It was really difficult to accept that," Dent said. "It affected my concentration defensively and offensively."

Fortunately for Dent—and Lemon—the manager was short of substitutes and was unable to pinch-hit for his shortstop in the seventh inning of the Yankees' division playoff game in Boston on October 2. Dent's three-run homer—only his fifth of the year—catapulted New York into a lead it never relinquished.

"After the playoff win in Boston," Dent said, "the World Series was a little bit of an anticlimax."

Dent didn't play as if it were a come-down. He had a hit in each of the first four games and contributed three hits in the Yankees' 12-2 victory in the fifth game. His two-run single in the second inning of the sixth game drove in the Series-winning



As wife Karen looked on (top), Dent accepted the keys to a 1979 Ford Turbo Mustang from SPORT Publisher Thomas A. Wolf. Below, Dent (20) accepted congratulations for his home run which helped beat Boston in the division playoff.

run. Dent wound up with a .417 batting average, ten hits and seven RBIs.

More importantly, he teamed with rookie second baseman Brian Doyle and third baseman Graig Nettles in a memorable display of championship defense.

Dent was the unanimous choice of the MVP panel, which consisted of the three official scorers, one representative each from the Associated Press, United Press International, NBC-TV and CBS Radio, plus the editor and managing editor of SPORT.

Dent, however, would have given the award to Nettles. "His outstanding defense turned us all around," Dent said. "There has never been an award for the best defensive player, and I thought Graig should get it."

That typified Dent's selfless attitude. (For more about Dent, see "Bucky Dent's 15-year search for his father," page 16.) "I just try to keep my mouth shut and go out and play the game," he says.

In so doing, Dent had helped write the same ending to the 1978 baseball season as the previous year, but he also had helped rewrite the plot. The Yankees' second straight world championship answered the critics of this free-spending, free-agent era in sports and dispelled any doubts about the thoroughbred ability of the Yankee team.

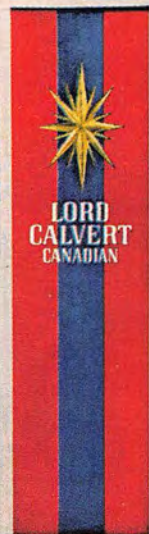
"They say we're the greatest team money can buy," Dent said, "but you can't buy what's inside players. You can't buy their hearts."

—Roger Director



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Compared to Dent's difficult search for his father, such fielding exploits as hurdling Dodger Bill Russell in the '78 Series were easy.



Bucky Dent's 15-year search for his father

An agonizing, seemingly endless quest finally ended happily for the Yankee shortstop. "There are millions of kids in the same situation I was," he said after deciding to reveal his story. "Maybe my success could serve as an inspiration to others"

By RICHARD O'CONNOR

Russell Earl "Bucky" Dent grew up harboring three childhood ambitions. One was to play baseball for the New York Yankees. Another was to play for a world champion. Both desires were realized in 1977. So, too, was the third ambition—it concerned Dent's 15-year search for his father.

Dent, whose birth certificate reads *Russell Earl O'Dey* (his mother's maiden name), was born on Nov. 25, 1951 in Savannah, Ga. His mother, Dennis, was divorced from his father, a serviceman who was stationed overseas at the time of Bucky's birth. Dennis, 26, was already the mother of a ten-year-old son, Jim. Before Bucky was a week old, his mother sent him to live in Florida with his aunt and uncle, Sarah and James Earl Dent, and he assumed their surname.

Bucky was unaware that Dennis was his real mother even though he visited her in Savannah every summer. He thought she was his aunt—until the day the deception ended.

It was late afternoon when Bucky—now ten years old—and Dennis were sitting in a Greyhound bus returning from Georgia to Florida at the end of his summer vacation. As Bucky recalls, they sat shoulder to shoulder, gazing out the window as the bus rolled by small towns and past acres of farmland dotted with tiny homes set back from the highway. They chatted intermittently about the countryside and the summer. Bucky was enjoying the ride. Suddenly Dennis turned and leaned forward. She stared coldly at Bucky. "Those people you live with," Dennis said, "they aren't your parents. I'm your mother."

Bucky was stunned. "That's all she said and then she dropped it," he remembers. "I didn't know what to think at first. I was shocked, but I wasn't bitter or disappointed. I had no special feeling for her and consequently I wouldn't accept her as my mother. I continued calling my aunt and uncle 'Mom' and 'Dad' because they brought me up. They deserved the titles. Yet sometimes when all the relatives would get together, I'd be afraid to call out 'Mom' because I wasn't sure who'd turn around. It was really strange."

The conspiracy to conceal his true father's identity was even stranger.

"After I found out about my mother," Dent says, "I became curious as to who my father was. I remember times I'd walk into the kitchen where my real mother would be cooking and I'd ask, 'Mom, who's my father?' and she'd ignore my question and tell me to go outside. So I began asking other people. My brother couldn't help me because he didn't remember my father well. My relatives? They wouldn't tell me anything either. Whenever I'd question them they acted mysteriously, as if it was something an adult shouldn't tell a kid. But I had a right to know. It was my father."

"I often found myself daydreaming about my father in school or on the baseball field: what he might look like or how tall he might be. I'd dream that I found him and that we became good friends. Don't misunderstand: I loved my Uncle Earl, but I still felt compelled to find out who my real dad was. By the time I entered high school, it had become an obsession."

At Hialeah High School in Florida, Dent was a remarkable athlete. He was all-state in football and baseball. He was also good-looking, intelligent and personable. "I had so much going for me that other kids didn't," Dent says. "Yet they had something I didn't: a father. Every kid has the right to know where he came from."

Dent enrolled in Miami Dade North Junior College in 1969. The following year, after marrying Karen Lynn Ullrich, he and his wife traveled to Savannah and questioned family, friends, lawyers, hospital personnel and city officials. But since Bucky couldn't supply his father's picture or name, the search was fruitless. "It was so depressing," Dent says. "We had no leads to pursue and so nobody could help us. Over the years I've tried to think of any possible reason why my family wouldn't help me. But I can't think of any... that's because there wasn't any."

"I don't think most of my family realized how hurt I was, although I guess my maternal grandmother did, because one day she told me that my father's name was 'Shorty' and that he was a Cherokee Indian. That was all she said. She died soon after and my leads dried up."

Dent continued his search, although he had less time to pursue it because his baseball career was flourishing. The Chicago White Sox signed him to a contract in 1970 and heralded him as the next Luis Aparicio. In 1972 he won the Hustle award at Knoxville and made the Southern League All-Star team. Two years later he was Chicago's starting shortstop.

During the next few years, Dent's success on the field—he was second to the Rangers' Mike Hargrove in the Rookie-of-the-Year balloting in 1974 and a member of the American League All-Star team in 1975—was in marked contrast to the frustration he was experiencing off the field. The search for his father had reached an impasse. No clues developed. No family members cooperated. Hope waned. Dent discussed his problems with the chaplain at the White Sox Sunday chapel, Dave Claerbaut, who had had a similar experience. "It was getting to the point," Dent says, "where I resigned myself to the fact that I'd never know who my father was."

One afternoon in 1976 the phone rang in Bucky's Chicago home. Karen answered. A man asked to speak to James Earl Dent.

"You must mean Bucky Dent," Karen said.

"No," the caller said. He hung up.

The call baffled Bucky. After all, James Earl Dent, his uncle, had been dead for

Dent's Search

almost three years.

"First of all," Dent says, "almost everyone knew that my Uncle James Earl was dead. Second, when Karen asked who was calling the man hung up, I couldn't imagine who would have done that. I thought maybe it was my father." (It turned out later it wasn't, although the caller was never identified.)

The phone call triggered his search again. He lost patience with his family's coverup. "I was angry," Dent says. "A few days later I phoned my mother and demanded orice and for all to know who and where my father was. She gave in. She told me that my father's name was Russell Stanford and he was living in a nursing home around Savannah. I was ecstatic. Finally I had a solid lead."

But the lead wasn't that solid. Russell Stanford was his father's name, but he was not living in a nursing home.

Unaware of this, Bucky and Karen spent the winter following the 1976 season phoning or visiting every nursing home in and around Savannah. "We couldn't figure it out," Dent says. "No place had ever heard of a Russell Stanford. It was so frustrating that I was about to hire a private detective. Then one afternoon while we were in Savannah, my Aunt Sarah's lawyer called and said he had found in the city's census a Russell Stanford living on East 39th Street."

Accompanied by Karen and Aunt Sarah, Dent hurried to the address, but Stanford was not at home. Dent knocked on a neighbor's door and asked where Mr. Stanford could be found.

"Why?" inquired the neighbor.

"Because I think Mr. Stanford is my father," Dent said. "And I've been looking for him for 15 years."

He was directed to an upholsterer's workshop. En route, Dent sat quiet and pensive. "I thought of Dave Claerbaut, the White Sox's chaplain. Dave had told me to proceed cautiously. If I met my father and said, 'Hi, I'm your son,' it might freak him out. He might have been unaware of my existence. Or he might know but not really care."

Bucky sat in the car and wondered what he would say after all these years. As an athlete he had been in many tense situations, but this encounter loomed as perhaps his most challenging. "Sports is one thing," Dent says. "But this was something I had never confronted before."

When they reached the upholsterer's workshop, Karen and Aunt Sarah waited in the car while Bucky went inside to find Russell Stanford. He was trembling.

A receptionist greeted him and, at Bucky's request, paged Russell Stanford. Moments later, a short, gray-haired man appeared.



Since finding his father, Dent has "peace of mind and a true sense of my identity."

Bucky stood there, and because he had to do something and couldn't think of anything else, he extended his hand and said softly, "You probably don't know me, but I'm Bucky Dent."

"You're Russell Earl," said "Shorty" Stanford.

"You know," Bucky said, breaking into a smile, "I've been looking for you for 15 years."

"And I've been living in Savannah for 15 years," Stanford replied.

Initially the encounter was awkward, but gradually the nervousness faded and the two men relaxed and chatted.

"There was so much to say, but where do you start after all those years?" Dent asks. "My father knew who I was through various relatives, and that I was a professional baseball player. He said that at times he had wanted to contact me but hadn't because he didn't know if I would be receptive. That night we went to dinner and talked endlessly. A few days later my dad Shorty threw a party for me and I met many relatives I never knew existed."

Once he found his father, Dent stopped speaking to his mother. "I am bitter toward her," Dent says. "She withheld the truth from me for all those years when she knew how important finding my father was. And when she did tell me something it was wrong. I cannot forgive that."

Few people, including his teammates, know of Dent's search. Dent is a private man who lives his life unobtrusively. He recently consented to discuss his past because of what it might do for others.

"I didn't wish to discuss it at first simply because I didn't want people feeling sorry for me," Dent says. "But then I realized that there are millions of kids in the same situation as I was. I thought maybe my success could serve as an inspiration to others. I only hope others are as fortunate as I was. Some people who search for a missing parent come up empty-handed or are rejected or, worse, find they can't develop a relationship."

"People ask me if finding my father has been worth it. Most definitely. I have a tremendous peace of mind and a true sense of my identity."

The relationship between father and son has flowered. They speak frequently on the phone and see each other during the off-season. In 1977, his first year with the Yankees, Bucky paid for his dad to come to New York and watch the World Series, which the Yankees won. (Dent was the MVP of the 1978 Series. See page 13.)

"That was a dream year," Dent says. "I had always dreamed about playing for the Yankees, about playing for a world champion and about finding my father. You know, I had a helluva season." ■

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Behind the Cowboy struggle to reach Super Bowl XIII

With every opponent striving to bludgeon the champs, and their spirit and motivation seriously in question, Dallas found the 1978 season its greatest challenge to building a dynasty

By MARK RIBOWSKY



It was six weeks into the National Football League season and the noises coming out of Dallas were ominous. The defending Super Bowl-champion Cowboys had gotten off to a strange start: They had gained more yardage than any other team in the league, given up less yardage than all but three other teams in the NFL, and hadn't allowed a touchdown in 11 quarters. But they had lost two of their six games and had struggled in others. The St. Louis Cardinals had to miss a possible game-winning field goal in the closing minutes of the fourth quarter before Dallas could achieve a 24-21 overtime victory. The Los Angeles Rams had sandblasted the usually airtight Cowboys defense for 317 yards, and forced quarterback Roger Staubach to pass 46 times, picking off four of his throws. And, for only the second time in six years, the Cowboys' vaunted multiple offense had been held without a touchdown—and this was accomplished by Dallas' archrival in the NFC East, the then-undefeated Washington Redskins.

And out of all of this came the noises . . . Tom Landry, the Cowboys' brilliant head coach for their entire 18-year existence, grumbling about a distinct lack of fire in the club's play, about having a "mountain to climb" this season . . . defensive end Harvey Martin, way behind his club record-setting pace of 23 sacks last year, blasting Cowboy fans for their lack of inspirational enthusiasm . . . the Dallas press reporting an alleged predictability in an offense with

The Cowboys rely on old pros like quarterback Roger Staubach (at left); youngsters like Tony Dorsett (top), Dallas' leading rusher; and young vets like end Too Tall Jones (No. 72, below), whose primary job is stopping the run in the "flex" defense.



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Cowboys

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In early October, I watched from the Texas Stadium pressbox as the Cowboys played their best game of the season—a 24-3 wipeout of the New York Giants in which the offense, using hardly predictable strategy, passed 14 times on first down and the defense held the Giants to 142 yards and sacked their quarterbacks eight times. Still, there were a few obvious problems. The most worrisome was the young offensive line which—weakened by the retirement of one All-Pro tackle (Ralph Neely) and recurring injuries to another (Rayfield Wright)—was so confused by the Giants' blitzing 3-4 defense that it allowed Staubach to be sacked five times. What's more, the Cowboys faced one of the toughest schedules in the NFL for the balance of the season, including two Thursday games—one against Minnesota and another meeting with Washington.

Nevertheless, the Cowboys had gotten off to worse starts before—5-4 in 1970, 4-3 in 1971, 5-3 in 1975—and went on to the Super Bowl all three times. Landry's computerized mind and football system are still the most innovative in football, and the personnel supplied by Cowboy general manager Tex Schramm and scouting genius Gil Brandt could easily be the strongest in the game—a perfect blend of three age groups that has produced a new Cowboy order while retaining links to the club's 12-year winning tradition.

But if the Cowboys were to pull out of this early slump and demonstrate that this team could become the dynasty which so many had deemed it to be, the leadership toward that end had to be provided by the major forces in each age group—the young Turks, the young veterans and the old pros. In spending a few days with key members of each group, I found none lacked confidence in his ability to do just that. But the players also had no delusions: The 1978 season had already become the Cowboys' greatest challenge to building a dynasty.

The young Turks

Twenty-eight of the Cowboys have joined the club in the last four years, including the eight rookies who made the 1975 squad and injected an effervescent zeal into the theretofore notoriously unemotional team that reached the Super Bowl that year. Linebackers Thomas Henderson and Bob Breunig and defensive tackle Randy White arrived then. Last year brought Tony Dorsett.

Two hours before a Cowboy workout at their North Dallas practice base, Tony Dorsett sits at his locker eating a plate of fried chicken. Dorsett, wearing a blue knit shirt, a towel around his waist and three gold chains around his neck, barely looks up from his plate as I sit down next to him

and ask how the ankle he had injured on Sunday was feeling. "Okay . . . been taking some treatment," he mutters in his high-pitched voice and slightly slurred speech. "Don't you know? I'm indestructable."

If only the 5-foot-11, 190-pound halfback was. Then the Cowboys wouldn't worry about the electrifying runner being busted up while carrying the ball 20 times a game. Though the former Heisman Trophy winner from the University of Pittsburgh rushed for 1,007 yards while learning the offensive system last season, he suffered nagging knee, ankle and calf injuries. One Dallas sportswriter told me that if Dorsett gets "popped hard early . . . he loses his abandon." Dorsett emphatically denies this, saying, "I've always played hurt, ever since high school, and I haven't done too bad. Hell, I could've stayed out Sunday but I went back in. I got a lot of pride in this body."

There's been quiet talk in Dallas that the Cowboys might be relying too much on Dorsett (the NFL rushing leader with 584 yards after six games). Even last season

Breunig: "I think we make up in guts and enthusiasm what the old Cowboys had in brains"

there were gentle complaints from tight end Billy Joe DuPree and wide receiver Drew Pearson that the Cowboys weren't taking advantage of the keying on Dorsett that eased coverage on them. "Yeah, teams load up at the line against me, but it was like that last year, too," Dorsett says. "The fact that I'm getting my yards and [fullback] Robert Newhouse is getting his means the offense is doing its job. . . . Motivation? It's hard to say. We had a great preseason in terms of spirit. We went into it determined not to be complacent. Maybe we left something back there. . . . But it's coming now."

Although Dorsett is being polite, he's not making eye contact, not really getting into this interview. "That's how he is . . . quiet, humble and guarded," a Cowboy player will tell me later. "Some guys think he's snotty but you talk to him and don't find it. . . . He's too innocent to be snotty." Dorsett won't talk about the run-ins he had last year with a bartender over a racial slur and a cop who arrested a woman friend on drug charges. "That's all over," is all he'll say. But his friends say that Dorsett was angered when NBC canceled a sports commentary deal and Fabergé an endorsement deal because of the bad publicity, and that he was annoyed about the Cowboy front office's bombarding him

during the off-season with "visits" by former Cowboy stars and Dallas businessmen to counsel him on the responsibilities of being a Cowboy.

"I'm not a little kid," Dorsett says. "I can take care of myself. I don't need people telling me how to act." Dorsett moved out of Dallas to a home in the suburbs this year. Is it to stay away from trouble? "Nah, I don't have to go into town to get what I want now . . . they can come to me." I ask him if we might continue this interview away from the field, maybe at the Playboy Club next to my hotel. A wide smile for the first time. "I can't do that. . . . I go with three bunnies, and they all think they're the only ones."

Thomas Henderson, who had missed parts of three games with a bad ankle that had caused him to leave the Giant game, comes out of the trainer's room in a yellow T-shirt reading: HOLLYWOOD. He sits at his locker—which features a piece of cardboard pasted with photos of Henderson as a child. "It's there because I like to remind myself what a beautiful baby I was . . . and still am," Henderson says, his voice booming through the room.

Dallas sportswriters are used to lines like that from Henderson. He is their ace in the hole on a slow-news day: the playful narcissist, the pioneer of the over-the-crossbar spike-dunk after scoring with interceptions, the fledgling movie actor with the glittering smile. Now, however, when I ask a few questions Henderson says, "Hollywood ain't doin' no talking. Hollywood's hurting, he don't feel important enough to talk."

As many Cowboys pointed out, Henderson's injury problems had been an overlooked cause of the club's woes. "Teams are running on [Henderson's] strongside and rolling out to that side on pass plays to stay away from Martin and White on the other side," said defensive coordinator Ernie Stautner. "And because of that, they're keeping [strongside defensive end Ed] Too Tall Jones from helping out on the pass rush." Henderson says he's too depressed to talk about that now, but when I ask about his last movie, the spark returns.

"I did *Semi-Tough* . . . Burt Reynolds is supposed to have played college ball but it had to be a long time ago; he runs as fast as my mother."

If Henderson is a natural press favorite, however, he may not win the Cowboys' congeniality award. No less than Bob Breunig, the deferential middle linebacker, told me, "Some guys resent Tom's, uh, brashness." Other Cowboys went further. Which may be why Henderson tells me now, "Last spring I got hepatitis and was in the hospital for eight days. And nobody sent me a card or called. . . . It's okay. I don't hold it against nobody. But it just told me you gotta care for yourself, that no one else will."

Cowboys

Henderson is a prime Schramm-Brandt find, a No. 1 draft pick out of miniscule Langston (Okla.) College. A 6-foot-2, 220-pound defensive lineman, Henderson's team won only one game his senior year, but the Cowboys loved his speed. After putting on 20 pounds through weightlifting, and after playing two years as an exuberant special teamer, he clinched the strongside linebacker spot. The slam-dunk? "You gotta give the people what they want." What about Houston's Billy (White Shoes) Johnson's contention that the slam-dunk wasn't as tough as it looks? "Hey, you tell Billy his Funky Chicken is old hat," Henderson says, "that I was doing it at Langston. Tell him to do the Disco Fever like me. Tell him to watch Hollywood swingin'." Then his voice trails off again. "If I ever get back in. . . ."

Bob Breunig has just finished taping his radio sports show in a meeting room. Most everyone on the Cowboy payroll, it seems, has a show, including Tex Schramm and Tom Landry. Now, Breunig, his jeans and gray sportshirt filled out by a body seemingly chiseled from a boulder, crosses the street to a Tom Thumb market and sits at a table in a snack area. The way the Cowboys are worshipped in this town, I expect Breunig to be mobbed. But no one gives him a second look.

Breunig isn't your high-visibility guy. He doesn't play with the flair of the Cowboys' last star middle linebacker, Lee Roy Jordan, but at 6-2 and 225 pounds he is bigger and faster than Jordan was. In the Super Bowl against the Denver Broncos, Breunig had an interception, a fumble recovery and a tipped pass. Indeed, it was when the Cowboys moved White from middle linebacker to tackle and shifted Breunig into the middle that their defense meshed.

"When they had me on the outside, I was a little lost," Breunig says. "The new angles, the keying on the tackles instead of the guards and center. . . . I was thinking more than tackling."

In the middle, Breunig turned into a terror. "Sometimes it looks like Bob's not playing the flex," says linebacker coach Jerry Tubbs, referring to the Cowboy system of "area" rather than "people" coverage. That system requires linemen to hold their position for a second before charging, and linebackers to fill the areas vacated by the linemen. "Breunig's so damn fast and intense that he's always at the ball after having covered about three areas first."

Says Breunig: "That's the only way I can play it, by being intense. Look, I played for Frank Kush [at Arizona State]. You couldn't spit without sweating for Kush." Breunig has bright, dark eyes and

brown hair that hangs in bangs over his forehead. He smiles a lot and makes me think of Bruce Jenner. Breunig is cut from the same mold: humble, wholesome, righteous (he's the Cowboy chapel leader), every mother's dream. "But don't go heavy on that stuff, okay?" he asks me. "That wouldn't make me look like a very interesting person, would it?"

Breunig says that many young Cowboys are still getting the hang of the flex, that mistakes are inevitable, and that the Cowboys have made an inordinate number this year. "Against Washington, I'd call a defense and guys would go the wrong way. I think we were concentrating more last year. But to hold Washington to nine points [Dallas lost 9-5] while making mistakes tells you something. I think we make up in guts and enthusiasm what the old Cowboy teams had in brains."

He thinks a moment. "Listen, don't say that I'm a mean animal on the field. Say I'm aggressive." Another smile. "Randy White. . . . he's the mean animal."

A Linda Ronstadt tape plays softly in Randy White's Ranger camper truck as he drives briskly through the streets of Dallas after a Cowboy workout. Listening to people around the Cowboys talk about this 6-4, 250-pound "Manster"—safety Charlie Waters' nickname for him, for half man, half monster—I'd expected White to be a tough interview. A supposed nontalker, the Dallas *Morning News*' Bob St. John once wrote of White, "When he gets philosophical, he'll say 'maybe.'" Yet now, when I ask him why he's driving a van and not the Thunderbird that SPORT had given him as the co-MVP (with Harvey Martin) in Super Bowl XII, he giggles and starts chattering away.

"I busted it up," he starts. "Stopped at a red light and the guy behind me plowed

Safety Cliff Harris croons scatological tunes when not covering receivers with his brooding buddy, Charlie Waters.



into the rear end." Another hearty laugh. "Besides, this is more suited to me. I brought it down from my farm in Landenberg [Pa.]. I got 21 acres up there. Beef and cattle, and I raise my own food."

A few minutes later, White walks up a flight of stairs in a wood-stucco building. Inside his small, plant-filled apartment is his fiancée, a stunning blond model named Vicki who had just caused a sensation by posing for the cover of a newspaper-supplement magazine in see-through pants. In a corner is an aquarium. "I got Oscars in there, the kind that jump up and take the food out of your hand. . . . I also used to keep rattlesnakes in there, not defanged ones, real poisonous ones. I let a guy in Delaware keep 'em for a while, but I guess they acted up because he shot their heads off. . . . No, I don't know why I kept 'em. They just appealed to me."

These symbols fit White's image: power, strength, ferocity. And yet Breunig, who used to live with White, says Randy is beyond stereotyping. "People think he's a comic-book character, the Hulk. But he's really a funny guy. Once he stole a cigar-store Indian, just picked it up and threw it in his truck. He gets that glint in his eye and looks for some, uh, fun." This is not to say White isn't an insular man. He admits that he tends to keep things inside: "Like when they moved me to tackle, it bothered me because I thought it meant I wasn't doing my job. . . . Maybe I'm too sensitive." Then, too, on the field White is a nontalker and always has been, even as an All-America defensive end at Maryland. One reason for his move from linebacker was his on-field reticence. Says Ernie Stautner: "You can't call signals by mental telepathy."

White grins under his mustache, his dark, sleepy eyes narrowing. "I'm kinda in my own world out there. I do something called psycho-cybernetics. . . . 15 minutes a day visualizing positive things, like sacking quarterbacks. By Sunday, I'm in a shell. I don't know names and faces, just the guy I have to beat." A 430-pound bench-presser—40 pounds more than any other Cowboy—who can run a 4.7 40, White's arsenal is deadly diverse. When he joined Martin on the weakside, Martin was free of double-teaming and got 23 sacks. White had 12 and was the third-leading tackler on the team.

Prior to the Giant game—in which White had three sacks and Martin one—they had been stymied in 1978. Says White: "I know I caught a lot of people by surprise last year; they didn't know how to play me. Now they're not going for my fakes as much. The quarterbacks are also throwing a lot of dump-offs. . . . No, it's not a problem. You just keep adjusting, reading, and going full speed. Sooner or later, things will break."

The young veterans

Eight Cowboys have played at least five



Harvey Martin (standing) greets Tony Dorsett at Lucifer's disco, one of Martin's several business interests.

years but are under 29. As such, they bridge different Cowboy eras. Defensive ends Harvey Martin and Ed Jones are the bridge from the Bob Lilly-George Andrie "Doomsday" defensive line, center John Fitzgerald from the Blaine Nye-John Noland-Dave Manders offensive line.

It is about midnight and the dance floor at Lucifer's, a disco-bar in Dallas' black district, is packed with bodies writhing to an earsplitting sound system. But in a side office, the owner of the club isn't happy. "The goddamn air conditioning . . . when's it gonna come on?" Harvey Martin yells into a telephone. Slamming the phone down, Martin growls an obscenity, peers through his thick glasses and says, "Let me tell you, the pressure of winning two Super Bowls is nothing compared to running a disco."

Martin, the Cowboys' 6-5, 250-pound human thunderclap, is also its prime entrepreneur, a man with a feel for the marketplace. "My first ambition wasn't to wear a football suit," Martin says in the closet-size room that barely holds him. "It was to wear a pin-striped suit, sit behind a big desk and drink martinis at lunch." Martin's interests in his hometown include two restaurants, a radio show and a sales-rep job with Dr. Pepper.

Lucifer's opened last March. "I grew up in Dallas, I care about it. I wanted blacks to have a place to go for a good time," says Martin. The crowd on this night consists mostly of young, well-dressed blacks. Says Martin: "We have a strict dress code here, we want a class crowd. You'll never see no drugs in here either."

Just then, Tony Dorsett comes into the office in jeans and a white-and-red knit shirt. "Crowded out there, man," Dorsett

tells Martin. Dorsett peeks through a crack in the door at the dance floor and says, "Wow, she's got *high energy*!" Turning back to Martin, who smiles at the young star's innocent joy, I ask about the drop-off in sacks this year.

"Let me tell you, it's tough being a Dallas Cowboy," he sighs. "You prepare like you always do but it's not enough, because everyone comes into the game like it's a Super Bowl. . . . I don't know, teams are going the other way, they're throwing quickies, the tight ends are brush-blocking after releasing off the line. I figure they'll come back to us, that the odds gotta even out. Even so, Randy and I are starting to freelance more, play games, stunt, we're starting to get there. . . . But the fans don't see it like this, they think we're playing bad."

During the previous week, Martin called Cowboy fans front-runners, causing a minor sensation. "Well, I was a little hot because we held Washington to nine points and still took some blame. I don't like busting my butt and having fans get on me. See, this town's spoiled rotten . . . and yet you never hear 'em urging us on."

Martin also blasted the league for liberalizing the holding rules. "It's caused nothing but dirtiness," he says. "It's like the cut-block when they go for your knees. It's vicious and disgusting." A sneer. "When someone loses a leg, then they'll outlaw it." Martin had been ejected in the first Giant game after being hit with such a block by Willie Spencer and kicking Spencer in retaliation, and there was some talk that the incident had messed up Martin's mind and game ever since. Says Martin: "I won't deny I'm sensitive. . . . I'm disturbed that this has a place in football. But, no, it didn't affect my game. That's what [Giant guard] Doug Van Horn wanted on Sunday, to get me into a talking thing. I ignored him and beat the crap out of him."

Dorsett adds, "They're an asshole team. When I got hurt [defensive tackle] John Mendenhall said, 'Hurry back.' I said, 'I will be back, chump.'" Martin grins and says, "They should do *more* of that. It gets us up. Last Sunday was the first time there was some ass-grabbing spirit in the lockerroom."

After a Cowboy workout, Too Tall Jones steps into the shower—and in minutes he has the room to himself. "When he goes in there, everyone else goes out," Thomas Henderson tells me. "Eddie uses shaving cream that smells so bad it makes your eyes water." Moments later, the 6-9, 270-pound Jones lumbers to his locker. I ask what kind of shaving cream he uses. "Magic Shave," he says, "shaves like magic." Henderson barks, "Yeah, and smells like crap."

Jones smiles as he starts dressing. He is a fearsome-looking man only up to his chin. His face has a kind of softness, a vulnerability that belies his massive

strength. Like Randy White, Jones also once had hidden insecurities about being so strong yet not being able to do what he wanted on the field. Jones admits that when the Cowboys drafted him No. 1 out of Tennessee State in 1974—trading away two starters to get the first pick in the draft—he came to town with images of grandeur. "I thought I'd dominate the league with a blizzard of sacks," he says.

But while Jones got some early fanfare by forming a third-down pass-rush platoon with Martin, he faded into the shadows his second and third years—a victim of the learning process required to play strongside end in the flex. Says Martin: "I felt for Eddie; he went through hell. The pressure on him was unbelievable, being a first pick. People thought he should be getting sacks, not realizing he *couldn't* because he has to play the run."

The soft-spoken Jones says, "Yeah, the people *did* expect too much of me. They didn't boo but they . . . uh, didn't cheer either." There were rumors at the start that Jones wasn't helping himself, that he refused to take films home and bitched privately about Landry's not having faith in him when the coach sat him down. Some players remember Jones sitting on his helmet in practices and brooding instead of asking for help. Then, in 1976, Ernie Stautner put a can of film in his locker. "I watched it and realized how bad I looked," Jones says. "I swallowed my pride a little."

Last year was a big one for Jones, a year of realization. "I used to bet Harvey two six-packs of beer a game that I'd get more sacks," he grins. "Then I realized Harvey was taking me for a ride. I can't get the sacks all the time, given what I gotta do. But now I can get as big a rise stringing out a sweep as sacking a guy. I still am going to dominate that left side. I can *feel* it. But if I have a bad game now, I don't worry. There's always the next game."

As for this year, Jones says, "Teams are doing all kinds of crazy things up front to stop us . . . the tackles are pulling every which way and they're keeping the backs in to chop on the ends. But they can't continue doubling me with backs because we can double their receivers with linebackers. They'll have to go back to the usual style—and that's when we'll get 'em, and get back our old enthusiasm."

Jones hurries off to his business affairs, a talent-booking agency—"I gotta go sign the Manhattans for a concert here next week"—and I cross the room to center John Fitzgerald. Sitting at his locker in his underwear and a cigarette dangling from his lips, his bushy head of brown hair and sharp features remind me of an Irish bulldog. In 1974 Fitzgerald replaced All-Pro Dave Manders at center and is now the heart of the offensive line . . . the pivot-man for Donovan and either Wright or second-year man Andy Frederick and guards Tom Rafferty and Herb Scott.

Cowboys

"We've had our problems, but we haven't been as bad as people think," Fitzgerald insists. "When you throw more, as we've had to do after falling behind in a couple of games, you allow more sacks. But we gave up five sacks against the Giants while technically playing a better game than against Washington, when we were making little mistakes—a step here and there out of place and what have you. We adjusted to that 3-4 even though it was a total surprise." A pause. "Everyone saves the new stuff for us, we're always on the spot. . . . We're young and we miss Neely, sure. Pat had to switch from left to right tackle and it takes a while to adjust. But, hey, we've been doing a pretty fair job, and one thing we don't worry about is motivation. Up front, you have to motivate yourself or get killed."

Fitzgerald never played center—or offense at all—until the Cowboys drafted him in 1970 out of Boston College, where he says he was a "fat defensive tackle." Taxied his first year; the Cowboys tried him at guard and tackle until Landry revived the shotgun formation and found that Fitzgerald was the best medium-range snapper he had. Fitzgerald insists he hasn't made an errant snap since: "Some one-hoppers but no over-the-headers." A rock on pass- and run-blocking. Fitzgerald is the leader of the Cowboys' "Irish Mafia" linemen, Donovan and Rafferty.

Rafferty's locker is a few stalls from Fitzgerald's, and when the young, poker-faced guard sits down, Fitzgerald says loudly, "But I'm not so sure about Raff. He carries it too far. Donovan and I put dog food in his hamburger bun a few days ago and Raff liked it so much he didn't know it was dog food. We call him Ruff now. Isn't that right, Ruff?" Rafferty, a man of few words, looks up and mutters an obscenity. "That's an improvement," Fitzgerald says. "The last time we kidded him about it, he lifted his leg."

The old pros

Seven Cowboys go back to the club's first Super Bowl year, 1971. Because they know the system and the league best, ultimate leadership of the Cowboys doubtless lies with quarterback Roger Staubach and safeties Cliff Harris and Charlie Waters.

"We're not lacking for effort and preparation," Roger Staubach is saying as he changes into his jeans and sneakers after another workout. "But we haven't had that chip on our shoulder, that dislike for people you need to win." He shrugs. "Maybe those two butt-kickings were the best thing for us."

Staubach will be 37 this February, but the smooth, bright face under his curly brown hair still looks about 25. Although he still does not call the Cowboy plays, his

command of the offense is indisputable. "He's the technician," Landry says. "He makes the plays work." Last year, Staubach led the NFL in passing, was 37-of-61 in the playoffs, 17-of-25 in the Super Bowl. Staubach, the head and heart of the offense, is the first to know when it's in a rut. "I was in a rut in the Washington game," he says, "a poor one for me. I blame myself for that loss. . . . I did things I wouldn't even consider normally. I saw [Redskin safety] Ken Houston rotate back on one play, yet I still threw it right to him. I have nine interceptions, and it's like a disease; you just wait for it to end." Against the Giants, whose 3-4 defense dared him to pass, Staubach completed 17 of 32 passes for 246 yards and three touchdowns. "I liked that game," he says. "Maybe it'll open us up. . . . Yeah, it's possible we'd gotten a little conservative."

In his tenth year with the Cowboys, Staubach appears to his fellow Cowboys as a man who is finally at ease with himself. "He used to be defensive, you couldn't get close to him," says prime receiver Drew

Staubach: "We haven't the chip on our shoulder, the dislike for people you need to win"

Pearson. "Now he comes to you, boosts you . . . he acts like a leader."

Staubach admits: "Up until last year I really didn't feel like the leader here. Now it's a case of not *expecting* to get criticized. I feel I've gained the respect around football, the effect of which is that I feel in command out there." The only sticking point is not calling the plays. "It's the ultimate barometer of a quarterback's existence," he says. "I'll never feel really complete as a quarterback without that authority. It bugs the hell out of me, and Landry knows that. You can't argue with the man's success but the thing is, he knows I can do it . . . and that's what upsets me."

Staubach then goes over to the Tom Thumb where, unlike Breunig, he is besieged for autographs. After sitting down to lunch, he eyes me warily. "This story is about the Cowboys . . . not *me*, right? Because, I tell you, I'm not happy with the way the press treats me. They make me look like a joke: my religion, my feelings about family and country, my politics. It's gotten to the point where I can't say something in jest without it being taken seriously. I once went to pick up my kids' dog at the vet and it wound up in print like it was my favorite pastime. Hell, I didn't even like the dog. I got rid of it after that."

Is the image of the ultraconservative political man inaccurate? "Those labels mean nothing to me; my philosophy is very basic . . . and changes all the time. I'm not so blind as to deny that—while we stand for good things here—we don't provide equality for all. Even in the church there's incredible prejudice. And in the area of human rights, I'm as liberal as you can get."

Cliff Harris, the balding, handlebar-mustached free safety, is being serenaded by an alto from Western Union—a singing telegram from an auto dealer who wants Harris to do some commercials for him. Harris is nearly doubled up in laughter by the time the song is over, then he dances to his locker. In the stall is a license plate reading CRASH and a guitar with two broken strings. Harris picks up the guitar and starts warbling a scatological folk tune.

Two aisles down, strong safety Charlie Waters is quietly speaking of the Washington game, specifically Redskin quarterback Joe Theismann's game-killing safety. "Theismann's a punk," Waters says. "He ran into the end zone, then spiked the ball, which was dumb because we could've still recovered it. . . . But punks like him do things like that."

Waters is an introspective, brooding man who suffered a great deal emotionally in his early Cowboy years as a too-slow cornerback (he was shifted to safety in 1976) and from a painful divorce. The dark-complexioned Waters is easily turned off to people, especially the press—"They used to insult me when I got beat on passes, calling me 'Muddy Waters' and like that, so I'm always suspicious of them." He is 180 degrees apart from Harris in personality and background: They both came to the club in 1970, but Harris was a free agent from Ouachita (Ark.) Baptist College, while Waters was a third-round draft choice from Clemson. Yet, says Waters, "Cliff and I are as close as two people can get." And because of that, they seem to have an uncanny intuitive communication on the field that has made them football's best safety tandem.

"We've given each other feelings we never would've had; we see each other's point of view," Harris says a little later when I get them together out in the Cowboys' weight shed. "For example, I never used to care about interceptions, just go for the hit. Charlie taught me to make the play on the ball, and last year I got five interceptions, the most of my career. . . . The basis for that change of outlook was Charlie's methodical, analytical way of thinking. It rubbed off."

"By the same token," Waters says, "Cliff taught me to have the abandon you need on the hit. When I came here, I'd never made a tackle in my life. I was a quarterback and receiver at Clemson. But because of Cliff, I go into a guy head-first now, whereas I used to tackle with my

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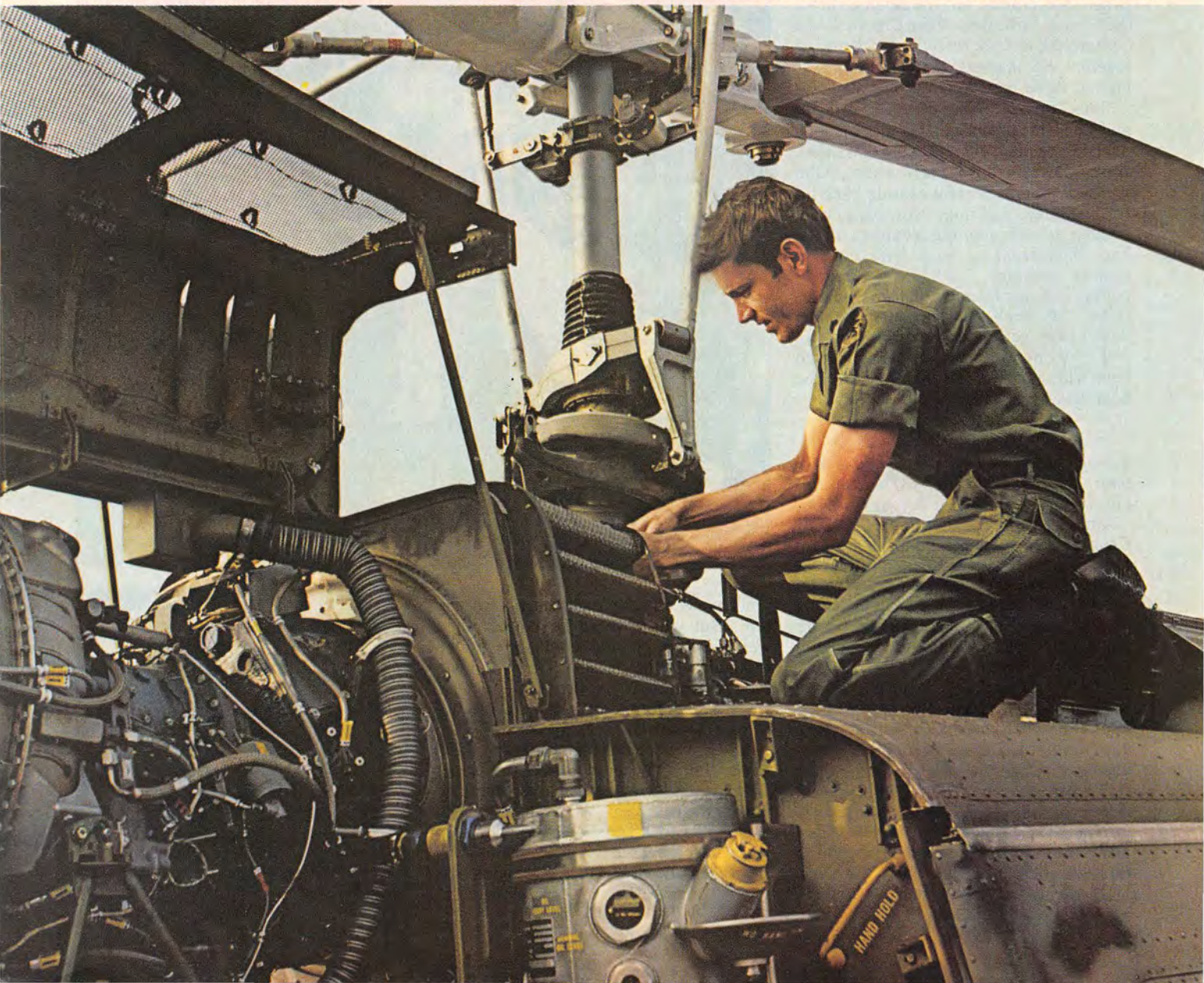
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Cowboys

arms. . . . Cliff doesn't analyze like me, he's free-spirited, blunt. If I miss a tackle and brood, he'll tell me, 'The guy was just faster than you'—which I wouldn't have even thought about."

On the field, Harris says, "We're on the same wavelength. . . . We're alike but different, one is a fist of steel, the other a fist of iron—but we're both anticipating what the other is thinking and doing." Waters remembers a Giant game when the crowd noise prevented him from telling Harris to change up on a defense and cover the tight end instead of a back. "But Cliff was on the tight end anyway and made an interception," he says.

The duo's physical and mental powers have been put to the test so far this season, however, and both agree that the new no-chuck rule has been the reason. "We play a contact, man-to-man," Harris says. "The rule's a killer for us. . . . But we've developed three new kinds of defenses to combat it. Again, the communication between us is crucial, but the defenses are a throwback to the days when Charlie was a cornerback and we really began working together. So, in a way, it's been fun working out these new coverages."

Says Waters: "What we're doing is disguising inside coverage, then doubling up deep on the big receivers, kind of a safety zone. During those early years, Cliff would work it so he'd fake inside, then I'd roll back deep with him. Now we're both coming up and jamming receivers off the line, then breaking back with them in shadow coverage. . . . So far, we haven't gotten it down because it takes time to refine the steps, and because the line hasn't been getting to the passer, but we feel very optimistic that by December no team will beat us on that rule—and we'll be back to where we were last year."

The coach

Young, old or in between, they all take their cues from Tom Landry. The last word on the Cowboys always belongs to him.

Under the giant photograph of Billy Graham that hangs behind his desk, Tom Landry slumps in his chair and says in his high-pitched nasal twang: "A few years ago I said I couldn't see myself coaching another ten years. But the way things are going, I don't know if I'm gonna make it through this one."

The first six weeks of the season haven't been good to Landry. Not only has his team been less than perfect, but only a few days earlier, his father had died of a sudden heart attack. Landry's pale-blue eyes still sparkle behind his silver-rimmed reading glasses and his complexion is ruddy and unwrinkled, but he looks tired and his words come slowly. "When you go through something like this," he says,

"you work harder just to stay even. You put in more time doing every little thing, and you don't sleep as much—or as well."

If it was simply a matter of countering other team's alignments, the Cowboy problems would be a snap for Landry, the originator of the modern 4-3 defense as a defensive back and coach for the Giants in the early 1950s and the flex and multiple-offense during his Dallas tenure. But what's been ailing the club, Landry says, is a trickier problem, one of spirit and motivation. "The fire hasn't been there yet. . . . Oh, sure, teams are doing things, they have a better idea of our tendencies now, and they're also getting up to knock off the champs. . . . But they did all that last year, too. You never fool teams for long, but if you execute, it shouldn't stop you if

us . . . the endorsements, the appearances, the contract negotiations. You can't stop guys from getting all they can—but it's damn tough to try and run a football team with all of it."

Given Landry's traditionalism, his apparently rigid conservatism in matters of country, church and morality ("I don't like our cheerleaders. They aren't wholesome; it's a bad influence on young people," he says. "I've told Tex we shouldn't have them"), I wonder aloud if he respects players as much as he did when he played, and he says, "More so. Today's players are a product of the '60s, an affluent society. The money thing is part of this era of freedom and individuality and a lot of it goes too far . . . but players are much more aware than we

Though Dallas made some great plays—such as Tony Hill (below) beating Bronco Bill Thompson for a big gain, and (at right) Harris (43) and Randy White assailing Cardinal Jim Otis in an overtime win—coach Tom Landry (bottom) was worried.



you have good people playing a good system. But while we've been executing, we're just not playing tough, determined football." Is the offensive line the main area of concern? "Not really . . . every week it's a different area, that's why it has to be emotion, not weaknesses."

Landry's seen this happen before and it scares him. "After we won the Super Bowl in '71, we never played with intensity the next year. We beat the 49ers in a playoff game we should've lost, then were just clobbered by the Redskins. . . . Both then and now, the distractions hurt



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were, much more concerned and sensitive to people and their needs. Heck, *something* had to be done in the '60s and we couldn't do it. I didn't agree with how some of them did it, but they changed things for the better, and are better people for it."

And Landry's been changed by them. "I came out of the Depression, and I didn't care how much work I had to do . . . but I didn't know about *people*. From these kids, I've learned to look at a guy like Ed Jones and understand he came out of college the big man all the time, so he doesn't

extend himself all the time, he gets complacent. I have to push him more than others to get him emotional."

"Landry used to fine you if you were 30 seconds late to a meeting," Drew Pearson says, "but he tolerates a lot more now. I used to think I was being watched here, the pressure was unreal. Now it's different He's loosened up, it's almost like he *likes* us." Indeed, at a team party last summer, a few Cowboys felt secure enough to throw a fully-clothed Landry into a swimming pool. Landry smiled and said, "I'm losing my authority."

Now, armed with all this inner serenity, Landry faces the task of igniting the fire in his players that will produce the dynasty so many expected in Dallas. "I have no magic solution, just hard work. . . . My first championship team overcame adversity: the idea that we couldn't win the big one. The Apostle Paul says adversity can build character, and that team had it. This team had it last year, and they surprised me by being so good. But they didn't have to overcome adversity. Now they do . . . so this year we'll find out just how *much* character they really have." ■

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The shocking inequities of the NCAA

After Congressional hearings, the NCAA stood accused of trying to wreck coaching careers and of treating Constitutional safeguards as if they were items on an AAU laundry list.

By PAUL GOOD

Over the years, the National Collegiate Athletic Association has hauled into hearings hundreds of schools and individuals to determine if they were squeaky clean. In 1978, the athletic shoe was on the other foot and it pinched.

A Congressional subcommittee in October wound up a year of investigation and ten days of hearings that laid bare the inner workings of the NCAA as never before in its 72-year history. Witnesses ranging from august college presidents to confused athletes who had lost their eligibility for such serious offenses as accepting a car ride told NCAA horror stories under oath.

By the hearings' end, the NCAA had been accused by witnesses of lying on its income-tax forms, of deliberately trying to wreck coaching careers, and of treating Constitutional safeguards as if they were items on an AAU laundry list. And the NCAA's Infractions Committee—which is composed of five professors who can vote to suspend coaches, place schools on probation and bar athletes from sports that could become their careers—had been likened to a kangaroo court.

A picture emerged of the NCAA acting as a law unto itself from its fiefdom in Shawnee Mission, Kan., from where, among other things, it:

- Taped telephone calls without the knowledge or permission of the other party who might unknowingly be a target of investigation. Although the NCAA stated officially that this practice ended in 1972, it continued as late as 1976 and possibly continues today.

- Stripped eligibility from an economically hard-pressed Oklahoma State foot-

ball player named Mike Edwards for travel violations. As a high-school senior, Edwards had accepted from an Oklahoma recruiting coach a ten-mile round-trip car ride between an airport and Edwards' home. Later, he received tourist-fare discounts on airline flights from Oklahoma to his Florida home.

- Preached the virtues of spartan existence to scholarship athletes while it lavishly spent money accrued from the players' performances. The same organization which ruled that Mississippi State tackle Larry Gillard should lose *all* his eligibility for accepting a \$12.50 clothing-store discount spent \$1.4 million in 1977 for NCAA public relations and promotion.

There were many embarrassing moments in Washington for the NCAA as California Democratic Congressman John Moss, chairman of the House Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee, poured on the heat.

"I have been writing law in this House for 26 years," Moss growled at one point, "and I've never seen anything approaching the inequity of NCAA procedure. I don't want to see us dismantle the NCAA. But up to this point, it has demonstrated an unwillingness to make the kind of changes that should be made. The courts have copped out. The ball is in our corner and I'm prepared to play it."

The NCAA, its self-righteous mask slightly askew, counterpunched. Executive director Walter Byers, who is respected and feared by collegiate officials, told the subcommittee: "I think the present system is a good system and should be continued." NCAA president J. Neils Thompson first charged that critical wit-

nesses were "biased or inaccurate or unknowledgeable," then backed off somewhat. Media apologists such as *Sports Illustrated* skimmed over damning evidence against the NCAA while applauding its "cooperative system of justice" with its collegiate membership. The praise came after Denver University law professor Burton Brody, whose school had tasted the NCAA investigative process and suffered probation, testified that the NCAA's "cooperative justice" was "cooperative only in the same sense ancient Rome's system of capital punishment was cooperative—the condemned is expected to carry his cross to the crucifixion."

The hearings began last February after Nevada Rep. James Santini successfully petitioned 68 congressmen to approve a probe of the NCAA. The action followed the now-famous Jerry Tarkanian case at the University of Nevada-Las Vegas (UNLV). When the NCAA hit the school in August, 1977, with a two-year basketball probation and ordered Coach Tarkanian suspended, Tarkanian obtained a court injunction that kept him on the job (*SPORT*, March, 1978). Nevada Judge James Brennan ruled at the time: "The evidence presented to the Infractions Committee was total, 100 percent hearsay without a scrap of documentation in substantiation."

While what changes the hearings might produce were uncertain as *SPORT* went to press, recommendations from witnesses and subcommittee members ranged from extensive NCAA self-reform to federal intervention in order to correct abuses. A great deal was at stake. NCAA behavior profoundly affects more than 800 member and affiliated colleges and universities, 6,000 coaches and some 400,000 student-athletes. And, by extension, it touches every American whose taxes help to support public colleges belonging to the organization. The NCAA's stranglehold on college sports poses a particular problem for low-income athletes whose chance for an education and a professional career in sports is at the mercy of the Shawnee Missioners.

With so much at stake, readers may wonder why they saw little or nothing about the hearings on television. The absence of coverage probably has to do with the NCAA's monopolistic control over the televising of major college sports events. ABC-TV currently has a four-year, \$118-million contract to cover NCAA football games. NBC has a big-money contract covering NCAA basketball playoffs. It appears that the networks and their affiliates, with an eye toward future contracts, have no desire to offend the NCAA.

SPORT covered all ten days of the hearings. Here are some of the important questions that were answered about the NCAA—and a few vital ones that

NCAA

strangely went unasked.

Isn't it true that only disgruntled coaches charged with cheating—Jerry Tarkanian, for example—complain about NCAA investigative and enforcement procedures?

Among the witnesses urging substantial changes in the NCAA were former NCAA president John Fuzak, an associate dean at Michigan State; Charles Neinas, the Big Eight commissioner who worked ten years for the NCAA; Missouri Valley Conference commissioner Mickey Holmes; and Clifton Wharton Jr., chan-

ically without NCAA membership]."

University of Minnesota president C. Peter Magrath, a former professor of Constitutional law, testified: "Membership in the association is as free-willed and spontaneous as . . . complying with the regulations of the Internal Revenue Service. . . . the NCAA regulates the athletic market with the immunity of a protected monopoly." Chancellor Wharton added: "I submit that when you need a [NCAA] manual of more than 260 pages to tell you how to conduct intercollegiate athletics, you are no longer talking about 'sport.'"

NCAA voting delegates are not inclined to rock the boat. Witnesses described their frustration in trying to reform rules when executive director Byers opposed

builder Sam Gilbert, who for years has been a highly visible UCLA backer. Other men who root for other schools far less flamboyantly are called, in NCAA parlance, "representatives of the university's athletic interests." Although they are private citizens, they are forbidden to provide an athlete with anything, even a Coke, that they do not make available to all other nonplaying students. If they do, the school is held responsible along with the athlete. The charge has proven virtually impossible to deny when the NCAA chooses to believe it is true. For example, when Mississippi State player Larry Gillard lost his eligibility over a \$12.50 discount, the store owner swore in an affidavit that he gave the discount to *all* students



Despite sharp criticism by chairman John Moss (right), NCAA executive director Walter Byers (above) insisted: "The present system should be continued."



cellor of the massive, 64-campus State University of New York. Fuzak, for example, said that the Infractions Committee is "too close to being investigator, judge and jury." Wharton criticized the NCAA's "lack of due process . . . the inability of those charged to face their accusers or even know their identity . . . [the NCAA's] hostile attitude [toward alleged violators] and presumption of guilt."

Don't NCAA members make the rules, and therefore shouldn't they change them, abide by them or quit complaining?

NCAA president Thompson said in a prepared statement that "contrary to the implications made by various witnesses, the NCAA is a *voluntary*, unincorporated association . . . NCAA policies and rules exist only because the NCAA members have voted them into existence." But under questioning from House subcommittee lawyer Pat McLain, Thompson admitted, "I would doubt if a single major institution could survive [athlet-

change. They agreed generally that any school can be hanged for some violation if Shawnee Mission singles it out. But as past president Fuzak pointed out, "only a handful [of members] have suffered through the full process of infractions" and thus nonaccused members may be unaware of its unfair aspects.

What about the charge of "selective enforcement"—that the NCAA goes after certain schools and leaves such sports powers as UCLA alone?

This key question received only cursory attention. Incredibly, the subcommittee did not focus on UCLA and its charmed life, even though midway through the hearings a revealing book about former UCLA star Bill Walton appeared, written by sports maverick Jack Scott. Scott had been Walton's advisor and Walton told the Associated Press that the book "is definitely the most complete and accurate thing that's ever been done about me."

Scott discussed wealthy Los Angeles

and tried to testify at the hearing. But he was branded a "representative of the university's athletic interests" and turned away by the NCAA. Subcommittee Congressman Norman Lent—who generally defended the NCAA—called that case "heartbreaking . . . an injustice."

Anyway, Gilbert somehow escaped the dread "representative" label. Scott claims he told Gilbert that an ex-UCLA star turned pro (guess who?) was going to pay "over \$4,500 back to you that you had given him while he played basketball at UCLA." Gilbert allegedly replied, "UCLA would have to return four NCAA championships. What I did is a total violation of NCAA rules."

Scott's book quoted Walton as saying he would "hate" to hurt UCLA, but "I can't be quiet when I see what the NCAA is doing to Jerry Tarkanian only because he has a reputation for giving a second chance to many black athletes other coaches have branded as troublemakers. The NCAA is working day and night trying to get Jerry, but no one from the NCAA ever questioned me during my four years at UCLA."

Neither, unfortunately, did the Congressional subcommittee and the question of "selective enforcement" remains an unproven speculation.

What is so reprehensible about the NCAA's investigations? Is every school it brands a violator innocent? Isn't it a good idea to stop student-athletes from being corrupted by sneaky payments and learning that cheating pays?

The hearings produced so many answers it is impossible to cover them all. Generally, NCAA critics conceded that many if not most schools charged with major violations were guilty. But evidence indicated that questionable investigative tactics and erratic punishment are visited on both flagrant violators and the in-

nocent. What lessons young athletes learn from this NCAA behavior is anybody's guess. Some hard answers to the above questions about Shawnee Mission investigations fell into three main areas:

1. Major penalties for minor or questionable violations.

Big Eight commissioner Neinas said that "it has been an NCAA practice to make a shopping list of allegations regardless of their seriousness . . . buying someone a hamburger is not the same as arranging for free use of an automobile." Example: Minnesota basketball player David Winey lacked travel fare home at Christmas, 1975. He told the subcommittee that a local alumni family named Johnson invited him to stay at their winter lodge. Mr. Johnson worked for the Jolly Green Giant Co., which was giving away 75-cent tote bags—lettered Ho-Ho-Ho—as a holiday promotion. Winey was given one. The NCAA charged him with accepting an illegal gift from a "representative of the university's athletic interests." He was also charged with accepting illegal meals, lodging and transportation, because the Johnsons had driven him to

their lodge where he ate and slept.

The NCAA ordered Minnesota to declare Winey ineligible, along with two other athletes also charged with minor violations. University president Magrath, who had been highly praised by Shawnee Mission for fully cooperating in its probe of a basketball scandal that Magrath had inherited when he became president, agreed with a basketball probation for the school. But the university refused to take away the athletes' eligibility. Outraged that its ukase was challenged, the NCAA then placed on probation Minnesota's entire men's intercollegiate athletic program.

Citing the "Ho-Ho-Ho" bag charges, Congressman Lent asked NCAA president Thompson if such minor violations were not simply the "basis of an accusation but [were] used to augment serious charges?" Thompson candidly admitted, "Sometimes relatively minor ones are the only ones that come up. But we have a feeling there's more behind them." A few minutes later, after some witness-table whispering, Thompson said, "I guess on reflection I had no real business saying that. That was a personal opinion."

2. Lack of due process.

Due process is a cornerstone of the American legal system. At its core is the right of the accused to confront his accusers and introduce witnesses in his own defense, to see all evidence against him and to have available a record of the proceedings. NCAA's resident Constitutional expert, University of Texas law professor Charles Alan Wright, said he would resign "in a minute" if he thought the Infractions Committee he chairs did not provide "all of the due process the Constitution requires." Others thought differently. Minnesota president Magrath called NCAA due process a "sham" and quoted a federal judge saying the NCAA "makes a mockery" of due process.

Specifically, a coach or athlete brought upon charges can never cross-examine his accuser nor can he bring witnesses to the hearings. The investigators read their "evidence" from written notes but need produce no documentary proof. The accused may appeal Infractions Committee rulings to the 18-man NCAA Council. But if he does, the accused cannot obtain a transcript of the Infractions Committee hearing; he is forced to travel to Shawnee Mission and take notes off a tape recording. Poor defendants have a particularly rough time. Mike Edwards, the Oklahoma State player charged with traveling violations by the NCAA, wanted to appear personally at his appeal proceeding, which was held more than 1,000 miles from his school. He could not afford the plane fare and the NCAA would not permit his lawyer to pay it.

Refuting charges under such conditions would test a Clarence Darrow. In 1975, Ohio State coach Woody Hayes and some

of his players made numerous accusations against Michigan State. Two Michigan State coaches voluntarily took and passed polygraph tests, but nevertheless were found guilty on the word of their Ohio State rivals, as recorded in handwritten notes by the investigators. In another case, an NCAA accusation centered on the testimony of a woman who died before the school could question her. The school asked then-enforcement director Warren Brown if it could see the woman's statement in order to reply. Brown wrote that it was not policy to send staff memos to institutions under investigation. "In the committee's view," Brown said, "the extenuating circumstances in [this] case are not cause for a waiver of this policy."

3. Questionable closeness between investigators and the Infractions Committee.

The Infractions Committee depends to a dangerous degree on the ability and integrity of the investigators. The current Infractions Committee chairman, Prof. Wright, testified that in a one-on-one situation, his committee would not take an investigator's word over the accused's without other evidence. Yet when confronted by the House subcommittee with just such a situation—an accused coach swearing that an investigator was not telling the truth—Infractions Committee member Arthur Reynolds said he did nothing about the coach's testimony because "it didn't match our past experience with the investigator."

The hearings bore out what NCAA critics had been contending all along—that once the investigative staff makes charges against you, the outcome is preordained. The Infractions Committee decides on the basis of investigative-staff reports whether to send a letter of Official Inquiry (OI) to a school, which then supposedly begins the investigative process to determine guilt or innocence. Assistant NCAA executive director Bill Hunt conceded on the witness stand: "I don't know of a single instance when the OI was issued and [guilt] not found."

Given all the money at its disposal to conduct proper investigations, why does the NCAA make so many mistakes yet have so few members protest its procedures?

NCAA revenue in 1976-77 totaled \$5.7 million, up \$1.9 million from the previous year. This was apart from \$24 million funneled through Shawnee Mission to member schools as their part of the take from radio-TV contracts and other activities of the NCAA's expert revenue raisers. This is critical money to many schools which might collapse without it; it is a strong inducement to play ball with the folks out in Shawnee Mission.

The NCAA's second-largest 1977 expenditure—\$415,000—went for "legal fees and expenses." Much of this was lavished on high-priced Washington lobbyists. The organization's last annual re-



port boasts of lobbying efforts "in Washington and state capitals." Yet the subcommittee learned that on the 1975-76 NCAA tax return which successfully sought tax-exempt status for the NCAA, executive director Byers checked off "NO" to a question asking whether the NCAA tried to influence legislation on any governmental level, i.e., to lobby.

Attorney Lana Tyree, who represented Oklahoma State's Mike Edwards, charged: "The NCAA can market products and use the athletes' images to do so. By restricting the amount of scholarships, the number of coaches, the marketing and advertising of products, the televising of competition and the ownership of rights in the NCAA, and by restraining the athlete, they have cornered the market. There is no amateur football—only a distinction between who gets paid. Why should the athlete generating a financial empire be singled out for restraints?"

"Would you like a completely unfettered student-athlete?" Rep. Lent asked.

"That doesn't offend me in the least," attorney Tyree replied. "It's better than involuntary servitude. If he was on an academic scholarship, any major corporation could give him anything—\$10,000 say—and he wouldn't lose any standing."

Despite any procedural shortcomings and dollar hypocrisy, is the NCAA fair and reliable as it seeks out violators?

Appropriately enough, the case that went to the heart of this question concerned UNLV Coach Tarkanian, whose struggle against the NCAA had triggered the hearings. From testimony and exhibits, a reader may draw his or her own conclusion on Tarkanian's claim that the NCAA and investigator David Berst were out to get him.

Critical evidence centers on tales from two transcripts made late in 1976, when the *Infractions Committee* was already hearing the Tarkanian case. The coach denied an NCAA charge that he had anything to do with trips that Brooklyn basketball talent scout Rodney Parker made to Las Vegas and elsewhere with a 6-10 hot-shot named Rudy Jackson. On October 26, Berst interviewed Parker in New York without knowing that Parker had wired himself to produce a tape that said in part:

"Bert: Well, the charge is there, on paper already. All I really got to do is explain what my information is and what the basis is for why that's there . . . that year when you and _____ and _____ went out to Vegas . . . I think there is an allegation in there about them [UNLV] arranging to pay the expenses for you and _____ to go down to that game. I don't really know that. That just makes sense to me that they would have, but nobody's told me that. The only guy that could know that for sure

is you, and you didn't tell me that. . . ."

"Parker: I remember that year. We didn't even pay the hotel bill down there . . . they're still sending me letters."

"Bert: But that's . . . one I don't know, so when we get to that question I'll just say, you know, I, it just seemed like a reasonable, logical thing to happen based on other information."

"Parker: I've been going down there every year and they never paid for it. I went down there this year and they didn't pay for it."

The NCAA would find Tarkanian guilty on the charge. About the time that tape was being made, Tarkanian in his own defense was giving the Infractions Committee a memo containing a serious accusation against NCAA assistant executive director Bill Hunt. The memo said that a year earlier, North Carolina State basketball coach Norm Sloan had been told by Hunt that the NCAA was not only out to find Tarkanian guilty, but to drive him out of coaching altogether. According to Hunt, the NCAA heard that Tarkanian planned to set up its investigators in Las

end the hearings, never questioned Berst about his strange conversation. It did ask Hunt about his alleged remarks to Coach Sloan and he said he "didn't believe" he ever said anything about drugs and prostitutes. The final Washington witness, called at a special session after the formal hearings ended, was Coach Sloan. Under oath, he backed Jerry Tarkanian's story in every particular.

Sloan, aware that he was marking himself as an enemy of the NCAA, was a nervous but convincing witness. He testified:

"[Hunt] became a little emotional. He said exactly, 'We're not only going to get him [Tarkanian], we're going to get him out of coaching. . . .' He stood up and his face got red. He said the NCAA had information that Jerry and some of his friends were going to arrange to have drugs planted in motel rooms and prostitutes in the motel rooms, and therefore discredit the NCAA and the investigation."

Sloan said he told Tarkanian out of "fear" not to quote him. "I just didn't want to get involved in opposition to the NCAA."

On that fearful note, the probe into the NCAA ended and subcommittee members adjourned to ponder the message they would deliver to Congress.

At the same time, NCAA executives met and discussed how to respond to the subcommittee's list of 46 recommendations made by witnesses at the hearings. Among other things, the recommendations called on the NCAA to completely separate its tainted investigative staff from the Infractions Committee and to appoint a blue-ribbon panel to examine NCAA enforcement practices and the all-powerful Infractions Committee. Witnesses also recommended that student-athletes not be punished harshly (as they have been) for minor offenses and that alleged violators be assured significant "due process" protection.

Meanwhile, an observer could only hope that everyone would recall the words of the witness who said: "Many of the [NCAA] rules and their interpretation lack any amount of humanism. I'm not talking about cash payments for play, new cars or jobs where the student doesn't even have to work, or the falsification of grades. [But] I feel almost every coach in the country has probably committed some infractions at one time or another because of the way the rules are written."

"If I were a mathematics professor and one of my students came to me with a personal problem, spent the night in my home and used my phone to call his parents, I think I would be considered a good, caring educator. But I am a basketball coach and if I did the same thing I could be accused by the NCAA and branded a cheat. . . . I am not talking about buying athletes. I am talking about common decency to a fellow human."

The witness was Jerry Tarkanian. ■

Attorney Tyree: "There is no amateur football —only a distinction between who gets paid"

Vegas with drugs and prostitutes, then have them arrested. Tarkanian's memo containing Sloan's story was denounced by NCAA official Warren Brown before the Infractions Committee as "inaccurate and false."

Now comes the second transcript presented in Washington by the NCAA itself. It covers a phone conversation of December 10, 1976, between Brown and Sloan (taped, by the way, without Sloan's knowledge). In it, Sloan tells Brown that he urged Tarkanian not to repeat the drugs-and-prostitutes story at his hearing.

"I said you can't do that," Sloan said in the NCAA transcript. "Number one, it isn't true. Number two, I said if you mention me out there, they're gonna go after me, and I said . . . the NCAA can get anybody they want any time."

"Then you do have the feeling," Brown said, "that if your name would come up that the NCAA staff or somebody else would come after you?"

"I believe it, Warren," Sloan replied, "with every bone in my body."

Who was telling the truth about these two transcripts? The Parker-Berst transcript would seem to speak for itself, indicating that the NCAA had made a charge against Tarkanian for which it lacked evidence. The subcommittee, hurrying to

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THE GREAT COLLEGE FOOTBALL PLAYOFF DEBATE !!!

For 15 years or so, people around college football have argued about creating a national championship playoff system. Most coaches love the idea—unless their teams share regularly in the big bowl money. Big bowl people hate the idea because their importance would shrink. Fans love it because presumably the best teams would fight head to head for the *real* championship instead of having a wire service name a paper champion. Academics hate the playoff idea because college football would be blown even further out of proportion. National Collegiate Athletic Association administrators love the idea because the NCAA bank account would swell from a slice of the millions that television would bid for the rights. And the networks would love it because sponsors would pay for the entire package.

But frankly, none of this is new. All these factions have taken these same hard lines for years and years—and through it all, almost nobody has bothered to ask the most important people—the players—how they feel. They're only the guys who have to go out and do the work. So we talked to players on nationally ranked teams and to professional players who had been on strong college teams.

Most of the current college players said they'd like a playoff system—until they realized it might run as long as four extra games. Then they insisted on one or two extra games would be quite enough. A few collegians, such as Notre Dame center Dave Huffman, said hell no, there's more to college life than endless playoffs. Some of the pros, looking back on their college careers, said that one bowl game was enough postseason football.

"I like the mystique, the debate about who's really No. 1," said the San Francisco 49ers' O.J. Simpson, who was the 1968 Heisman Trophy winner while at Southern Cal. "I think it's good for college football. The NCAA isn't the NFL. It would be tough on college guys to be put through a playoff system."

"Hey, Woody has enough trouble just getting his guys to go out to the Rose Bowl," said New York Giant guard Doug Van Horn, who played for coach Woody Hayes at Ohio State. "Could you imagine him trying to get them to go to three or four playoff games?"

One pro who disagreed with Simpson and Van Horn was New York Jet linebacker Greg Buttle. "I'd have gone for a playoff no matter how many extra games

For the first time,
the young men who would
play those extra games
sound off—vehemently
and vociferously

By PAUL ZIMMERMAN

it would have meant," said Buttle, who played on Penn State teams that won 39 games and lost only five in four regular seasons. Buttle played in the Sugar, Orange, Cotton, Japan and Hula Bowls, but never played on a paper national champion. "If you took a vote, I'm sure all the college players would go along with it."

Well, not exactly. Listen to Huffman, a 6-foot-5, 245-pound anthropology major from Dallas, who wound up on a paper national champion last season after Notre Dame's 38-10 victory over Texas in the Cotton Bowl: "In a way there's a poetic injustice at work. College should be a time for enjoyment, for freedom, and yet it's so pressure packed. Football takes from the first of April all the way to January. There's a break from May to August, from the end of spring practice until the beginning of fall practice, but you can't slack off. You have to run; you have to lift weights. College is meant for other things, too."

"When you go to a bowl, you play a 12th game that takes up all your Christmas vacation and even goes into January. Well, I can accept a 12th game when there's as much at stake as there was for us last season. But I like the idea that when the football season is over, it's finally over. Period. I like the feeling that, okay, now it's time to go to school and settle down. To

have to go into a bunch of playoff games would be insane.

"As it is, our whole season is blown—socially, academically and in every other way. Look, this is college. It isn't pro football. When you go to the pros, it's a business. But here there's the band and the cheerleaders and the whole mystique of the game. Let 'em argue about who's really Number One."

"Last year we were voted Number One. Alabama hated it. Southern Cal thought it was wrong. Penn State was upset. Fine, that's what college football's all about. Bands, controversy, rivalries. Take that away and you'll just have the NFL on a college level, and that's not my idea of a good time. I like what Oklahoma coach Barry Switzer said—that he could always win more mythical championships than actual ones. There's already too much money, too many business overtones in college football. I think the mythical championship is the ideal to shoot for."

Huffman's teammate, 6-3, 244-pound All-America middle linebacker Bob Golic, disagreed. "Personally I'd go for an extra two or three playoff games," Golic said. "I love playing football. If it means three extra weeks, I'd be willing to work that much harder for it."

Asked how he'd pick the playoff teams, Golic said, "Let the pollsters choose the top six or eight. The big controversy is usually about what order they should be in, not which teams belong. Then throw them into a playoff."

Quite a few college players agreed with Huffman, though. Southern Cal's junior quarterback, Paul McDonald, a business administration major, felt that the classroom pressure would be overwhelming if three extra games were played. "I'm sure the fans would like a playoff system," McDonald said, "but college football right now is almost to the point of the NFL. The time devoted to football is astounding. And the burden is on the athlete. If we go to a bowl, we have three weeks to prepare for our final exams. It's just about enough time. We have a short Christmas break now, and the breaks are the only times you have to get caught up on your schoolwork. We'd lose that if we had playoff games."

"I'm for a playoff, but only a one-game playoff," said McDonald's USC teammate, Rich Dimler, a 245-pound middle guard from Bayonne, N.J. "If two teams are undefeated after the bowl games, or if there are no undefeated teams and two

Playoff Debate

schools are top-ranked, let 'em play each other, winner take all. You can't play more than that. This isn't like a basketball tournament. We hit.

"But look at us and Oklahoma this year. If we finish with the same record and one of us has to be chosen national champion, they'll get it. Someone figured out the toughness of schedules and rated ours the second toughest in the country. Oklahoma's was rated something like 30th. They get ranked high in the polls because they like to run up scores on people. We don't run it up. Our philosophy is: Everyone practices, everyone plays. . . . You think I wouldn't like to play Oklahoma for the national championship?"

"A lot of teams keep saying, 'If only we could play Oklahoma,'" said Billy Sims, the Sooners' flashy junior halfback. "Well, I say give 'em their chance. We're not afraid to meet any challenges. Playoffs would be nice, but not after January 1. The season's long enough. Four extra games are too much. This year we finish our season on November 18. I wouldn't mind taking a couple of weeks off and then going into a couple of playoff games."

"The time factor might be a problem to some people," said Oklahoma quarterback Thomas Lott, "but can you imagine the tremendous excitement that would be generated by a USC-Oklahoma or Oklahoma-Alabama game for the national title?"

Of six college stars on an NCAA-ABC promotional tour last summer, five were against a playoff system. "Personally, I get enough football," said Michigan quarterback Rick Leach. "I wouldn't like to see the season extended. Four others felt that way, too—Ted Brown of North Carolina State, Jack Thompson of Washington State, Charles Alexander of LSU and Russell Erxleben of Texas. But [Penn State quarterback] Chuck Fusina felt that because he came from an eastern school, his team was always downgraded in the polls. I'd have to agree with him. A playoff would be great for a team like Penn State."

"I don't think you'd find anyone from Penn State opposing it," Fusina said. "Let's face it, the only way we could possibly be Number One in the polls is to go undefeated. My way would be to designate two bowls each year as semifinals of an elimination tournament among the top four teams. You keep rotating it; one year it would be the Rose and Orange, the next year the Sugar and Cotton. Then you'd have the winners play the following week in one Championship Bowl. But that's it. One extra week. Three or four weeks would be crazy."

"I'd play four extra games—or whatever they want—to get it," said Penn State's 260-pound defensive tackle, Matt

Millen. "What the hell, it's only an extra month. Sure, it's not easy dragging yourself to practice in our place in December, when it's freezing cold and everybody's bumped up, but if that much is at stake—a straight, down the line, true championship—I'd sacrifice for it."

"I feel two ways about it," said Giant center Brad Benson, who played in four bowl games while at Penn State. "The way it is now, locking certain conference champions into certain bowls, an independent team like Penn State is really at a disadvantage. It has to scramble. A good team from the East seldom has a chance to prove itself in a bowl game. I would be in favor of opening up all the bowl games and getting a national champion that way."

"Penn State's at another disadvantage. Coach [Joe] Paterno isn't the kind of guy to run up a score every week to get national recognition. What's college football for, anyway? To prove you're Number One every week or to give a lot of people a chance to play? If you're talking about a playoff after the bowls—well, one year we practiced for the Orange Bowl in 24 inches

Billy Sims: "Teams keep saying, 'If only we could play Oklahoma.' Give 'em their chance'"

of snow at our place, and we had to practice at night because so many guys had classes. The AstroTurf was frozen solid and considering the wind-chill factor, the temperature was 40 below. So if you talk about carrying a playoff into January—well, the starters would probably say, 'Yeah, let's go for it,' but the rest of the guys wouldn't."

An extended playoff system would need support from "the rest of the guys," though, because of increased injuries. "Put us in a playoff for an extra three or four weeks," Alabama halfback Tony Nathan said, "and I guarantee you people would get hurt. We really go at it when we practice, and after a long season more people would be injured."

Coach Paterno has recommended a two-week playoff, with the proceeds going into a kitty that any college with a financially troubled program could draw from. Socialism at the NCAA level.

Arkansas coach Lou Holtz also favors a two-week playoff. He would pick the four teams by a point system, as they do for the state high-school championship in Ohio. Caliber of opposition is the key. Team A would get a certain number of points for beating Team B, plus additional points for each victory Team B had achieved over its opponents.

"We got killed under that system," said Holtz' current quarterback at Arkansas, Ron Calcagni. "I played for Chaney High in Youngstown, and we went 10-0, and we didn't get to the playoffs. We had a terrific team, but our opponents weren't so terrific. Yeah, I'd go for a collegiate playoff—two games in January, no more than that—but I'd let the AP rankings or something like that decide which teams would play."

A playoff based on wire-service rankings would be tricky. Where, for instance, would a powerhouse among the black colleges fit in?

"In the four years I was at Grambling," said Giant defensive tackle John Mendenhall, "we sent 40 or 50 guys into NFL camps, and about 20 made it—guys like James Harris, Richard Lewis and Rich Harris. I think we'd have held our own in a playoff. Anyway, I sure as hell would have liked to find out. But under the AP ratings, we wouldn't have been picked."

"My senior year at Jackson State we went 9-1-1, and we had guys like Walter Payton and Leon Gray playing." Jet tight end Jerome Barkum said. "I think we could have competed with the big schools, but I'd have wanted to do it in a bowl, in a one-shot deal. In a contact sport like football, you can't put on a tournament."

Another question that could arise in a national playoff system: Can a selected team decide not to play? Traditionally, after a bowl invites a team, its players vote on whether to accept the invitation. At least that's what the public has been told. In truth, however, one head coach has sometimes "outvoted" all his players. "In my senior year at Alabama," recalled Jet quarterback Richard Todd, "we played Penn State [in the Sugar Bowl]. We'd rather have gone against Oklahoma [in the Orange Bowl]. We'd always vote, but actually Coach [Paul (Bear) Bryant] would vote for us. He'd call the seniors in and say, 'We've been offered this and this and this. If you don't choose this one, you're not worth a damn.'"

A Todd teammate, Jet offensive tackle Chris Ward, described how coach Woody Hayes handled bowl bids at Ohio State: "In two of the four years I was there, I'm sure we'd have turned them down if the team had voted. Last season, when we played Alabama in the Sugar Bowl, I'm sure we'd have turned it down. Coach Hayes didn't really want to take it to a vote. He knew what that vote would be. He accepted the bid in the lockerroom after we lost to Michigan. Once he accepted, what could we do? He said, 'Anyone who doesn't want to go can stay here.' Nobody did."

"I didn't spend a Christmas at home my whole four years at Ohio State. Okay, if you beat Michigan I might be able to see playing in the Rose Bowl, but to spend two to three extra weeks of hitting, just to lose a Sugar Bowl game 35-6—well, it's not worth it to me."

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Howard Cosell

By DAVE ANDERSON



No one else in sports projects as powerful a love/hate image as Howard Cosell, the controversial commentator. In a recent poll of TV sports viewers, conducted by Opinion Research Corp., the nasal-voiced former attorney emerged as both the best liked and least liked sports announcer, each by a wide margin. He was rated the best liked by 28 percent of those polled, with his ABC colleague Frank Gifford a distant second at 13 percent. Cosell was rated the least liked by 39 percent, with Curt Gowdy of NBC second at a mere three percent. For better or for worse, Howard Cosell creates a reaction.

Cosell is one of sports' busiest commentators. In addition to handling *Monday Night Football*, *Monday Night Baseball* and many Muhammad Ali fights on television, he also broadcasts three daily shows and a weekly half-hour show on the ABC radio network.

The son of a credit clothier, he was born in Winston-Salem, N.C. on March 25, 1920, but grew up in Brooklyn. Cosell graduated from New York University and the NYU Law School and was admitted to the bar at 21 before he enlisted in the Army as a private during World War II. He was discharged a major.

While building his law practice, he incorporated Little League baseball in New York; because of his LL connection, he was asked by ABC radio in 1953 to host a weekly LL show. That series led ABC to offer him a job in 1956 as a broadcaster; in 1961 he took over the sports slot on the network's New York nightly TV news. His career boomed with the emergence of Ali as a worldwide figure and later with the success of *Monday Night Football*.

Not long ago Howard Cosell sat in his small, unobtrusive ABC office while SPORT interviewed him. Asking the questions was Dave Anderson, a sports columnist for The New York Times and a frequent contributor to SPORT who

The controversial commentator smites, among other titans, ABC for Sunday night football, Pete Rozelle for "providing leadership by lassitude," and Muhammad Ali for continuing to fight

has known Cosell since 1955.

SPORT: With the Super Bowl approaching, Howard, how would you evaluate it in general?

COSELL: As the biggest hype in American sports. The week of the game is an endless series of promotions and parties.

SPORT: How should it be changed?

COSELL: It should be done with dignity, simplicity being dignity. It doesn't need the big hype. It doesn't need the big halftime shows. One year they had a simulated war, a re-creation of the Battle of New Orleans. It was utterly ridiculous. Get on with the game. It speaks for itself.

SPORT: Does the NFL need two weeks to prepare for the Super Bowl?

COSELL: I don't see why. Baseball starts the World Series in two days.

SPORT: Have you found most of the Super Bowl games to be exceptionally boring?

COSELL: On balance, the games have been terrible. Only two have been significant to the structure of professional football—the New York Jets' victory over the Baltimore Colts in 1969 and the Kansas City Chiefs' victory over the Minnesota Vikings in 1970—because those games provided parity for the old AFL with the NFL.

SPORT: Which was your favorite game?

COSELL: The Jets' victory, because of what it meant to the old AFL; without that triumph, the old AFL teams never would have remained together in the 1970 merger realignment.

SPORT: Does it bother you that you've never worked a Super Bowl game?

COSELL: It bothers me in the sense that my company has allowed a structure to develop where we're not involved. I think ABC should be doing the Super Bowl in alternate years just as we do the World Series in alternate years.

SPORT: Who will win Super Bowl XIII?

PHOTOGRAPHS BY DOROTHY AFFA

COSELL: I think the AFC representative will win, whether it be Oakland or New England or Pittsburgh or Miami.

SPORT: Should the format be mixed so that two teams from one conference could meet, if they are actually the two best teams?

COSELL: I do believe, in point of fact, that the better teams are in the AFC. In recent years, in my mind, notwithstanding the Dallas victory over Denver last January, there have been a number of teams in the AFC that could beat any team in the NFC. But I still think the present system is the best one because of the public interest in what was really the old NFL and the old AFL.

SPORT: If you were the commissioner, what would you do to change the NFL status quo?

COSELL: I would do many things. I think Pete Rozelle is providing leadership by lassitude. I think all the warning signs are up for a major decline in the popularity of professional football in this country.

SPORT: What are those warning signs?

COSELL: First, the so-called cheerleaders. The NFL tried to merchandise sex, however subtly it may have tried to do it. But it didn't turn out that way with the constant emphasis on the cheerleaders. The unsavory stories that have emerged have caused a turnoff among many women in this country. Gloria Steinem was not off base as a major leader in the women's rights movement when she categorically denounced the merchandising of sex. My own wife Emmy finds it offensive and I know from my talks with many leading women in this country that they do too. Second, the injuries. The NFL merchandised violence, despite protestations to the contrary. Violence was a basic appeal of the game in its golden age, which began with the end of the last decade and the turn of this one. The violence has now reached a point where the injuries are almost uncountable and where the competitive nature of a team can be destroyed—witness what happened in the AFC with the fall, almost simultaneously, of [Dolphin] Bob Griese, [Colt] Bert Jones and [Bengal] Ken Anderson early this season. Those injuries cannot be ignored or discounted. There have to be better protective measures taken. If I had been the commissioner at the time of the Darryl Stingley injury, I would have called an immediate conference, at which I would have gathered together the finest sports medicine men in the country, Ed Garvey representing the NFL Players Association and any committee of players Garvey might have appointed. I would have called for an intensive new study on injuries, with a full report to be issued within six months and with the promise of action to be taken based on that report. But nothing was done. Third, the officials. The NFL is a multimillion-dollar business with, like it or not, uncountable millions betting on the contests every week. But in the long run the game decisions are made by part-time employees in striped shirts. This is a palpable absurdity. Any attempt by the commissioner to protect the present system because full-time employees would cost \$2 million a year more is just false.

SPORT: The NFL argues it would lose many of its best officials who couldn't afford to leave their full-time jobs to be full-time officials.

COSELL: That argument is illusory. Why haven't they started, long 'ere this, a training school for officials? We don't have part-time umpires in baseball.

SPORT: But you play baseball every day. You need a football official only once a week.

COSELL: It doesn't matter. It would cost each NFL team less than \$100,000 a year to maintain full-time officials. They can afford it. The monies they're raking in are uncountable.

But money is not the issue. The issue is the credibility of the game.

SPORT: No matter who the official is, though, wouldn't there still be disputes?

COSELL: I've discussed this with Pete [Rozelle] extensively and that's his real argument—that in the long run you get down to a judgment call anyway. But my answer is, the public is entitled to know that the NFL is doing everything it can for the credibility and integrity of its game. It must be above suspicion. If the NFL had full-time officials and a training center, the public would know the NFL was doing everything it could to provide the most efficient service.

SPORT: Regarding the most efficient service, should the NFL use instant replay?

COSELL: I believe that instant replay can and should be used, but I do not think it will be used. I think the NFL is going through the motions.

SPORT: Getting back to the injury problem, should the quarterback be as inviolate as the punter?

COSELL: Yes. I believe in the protection of the human body and I think what's happened to quarterbacks this season is the best evidence of why. That's one of the things that would evolve from the injury study that I talked about.

SPORT: How much longer can the NFL maintain its golden age?

“NFL...game decisions are made by part-time employees in striped shirts. This is a palpable absurdity”



COSELL: I think the NFL peak occurred in the 1977 season. Then it made two mistakes—extending the regular-season schedule to 16 games and introducing a new TV package of four prime-time games in addition to the Monday night games. You have to judge the economics of the NFL by its accomplishments in prime time. The average Monday-night rating for 1977 was a 37 share of the audience. That means 37 percent of all sets in use were turned to ABC on Monday night for the three hours the game was on. Our first Sunday-night game this season got a 28 share, our lowest since the first game we ever televised. All our research indicates that after six hours of football on Sunday afternoon, people just won't look at the game at night.

SPORT: If the NFL peaked in 1977, has the overkill developed from the longer schedule or the extra prime-time games?

COSELL: They intermingle. I think the NFL has gone too far in the immediacy of its greed, but the networks have to be equally blamed. I personally urged against the purchase of the extra prime-time games by ABC, but I'm not an adminis-

trative officer in ABC and the people above me were advised by others above me to buy the package. If we didn't buy it, we would have lost our monopoly on prime time. One of the other networks would have bought it. And that's why we bought it—so that NBC or CBS wouldn't have it.

SPORT: You were criticized early this season by Robert Irsay, the Baltimore Colts' owner, as perhaps "coming dangerously close to abusing the power of the public airways" by repeatedly "condemning" a city and a franchise.

COSELL: His statement was false. The city was not condemned and the franchise was not condemned. I don't have a right of condemnation. Nor does any broadcaster. His statement was a palpable attempt to intimidate and thereby censor a man operating as a journalist over publicly owned airwaves to publicly licensed stations. His statement should have been immediately publicly repudiated by Commissioner Rozelle, but he chose not to do so. I spoke to Pete about it, reminded him that he has publicly reprimanded owners who complained about officials. He told me that he had ordered Irsay to write me a letter of apology which I have never to this day received, and which I don't want.

SPORT: Getting back to football, who is the NFL's best coach?

COSELL: I think the greatest coach in football, nonpareil, is Don Shula of the Miami Dolphins—there is nobody else at his level. I think he's the best coach since Vince Lombardi and, in the long run, he may go down as a greater coach than Lombardi.

SPORT: Which coaches are close to him?

COSELL: I don't think any really are. Again, in my view, propaganda enters into it. Tom Landry has a superb record with the Dallas Cowboys, he's obviously an excellent coach but he is a computerized coach. And you can take that computer and make it work for you and against him. This has happened to Dallas frequently in recent years. You know, for example, that if he is using the flex defense, you don't run into it on first down. And yet that's what the Denver Broncos did in the last Super Bowl. I found the Denver Broncos the worst coached team I've ever seen in their Super Bowl game plan. I couldn't understand why it wasn't spoken of on the air or written anywhere.

SPORT: Who are the other good coaches?

COSELL: Chuck Fairbanks of the New England Patriots is a good coach.

SPORT: Where do you rate the Raiders' John Madden?

COSELL: John Madden is a superb coach. That's why there is a pattern of late victories for the Oakland Raiders; late victories don't happen by accident. When it becomes a pattern, it's no longer an accident.

SPORT: What other coaches impress you?

COSELL: Chuck Noll [Steelers], Jack Pardee [Redskins], Chuck Knox [Bills], they're good coaches. Ted Marchibroda [Colts] is pitiful. Bum Phillips [Oilers], is smarter than he's given credit for. I lost a lot of respect for Red Miller [Broncos] in the Super Bowl game. Don Coryell [Chargers] is an excellent offensive coach, one of the very best; he also has a human capacity to inspire the men who work for him. John McKay [Buccaneers] is a good coach. Jack Patera [Seahawks] is a lot better coach than people think. Dick Vermeil [Eagles] is an outstanding young coach. Bart Starr [Packers] has yet to prove himself.

SPORT: What about the Jets' Walt Michaels and the Giants' John McVay?

COSELL: Michaels has yet to prove himself. As for McVay—a neuter.

SPORT: What about the Vikings' Bud Grant?

COSELL: Bud Grant is an enigma to me, a positive enigma.

SPORT: What about the Rams' Ray Malavasi?

COSELL: I think he'll be an excellent coach. I've known him for years. I know his ideas. I know his philosophies. I know the training he's had. [Oakland's] Al Davis has been involved in his training. Malavasi has all the right background.

SPORT: If Shula is the best coach, which team has the best front office in terms of player personnel?

COSELL: At this point in time, the best front office may be the New England combination of Frank "Bucko" Kilroy and Chuck Fairbanks, but in a very short time I think the best combination will be in Washington with Bobby Beathard and Jack Pardee.

SPORT: How about Al Davis?

COSELL: It's impossible to derogate Al Davis in a football sense. Davis and Madden are a superb combination and for years they have been the best. But they've got to take a look now at their operation. I think there was a suggestion of

"I think the NFL has gone too far in the immediacy of its greed, but the networks have to be equally blamed"



panic on Al's part when he gave the Rams a [1979] first-round draft choice, a [1980] third-round draft choice and a [1981] second-round draft choice for cornerback Monte Jackson early this season. To me, that's a clear indication that Al is concerned about the decline of his football team.

SPORT: What about the Cowboys' front-office triumvirate of Tex Schramm, Gil Brandt and Tom Landry?

COSELL: Economically, for producing a profit margin, the Cowboys have the best organization in football. And they've certainly had a steady flow of fine personnel. But I think the team on the field has been the most overrated, most overpropagandized team within my memory in professional football. They're a good team but not the best team. They don't have a big back in terms of size, as they did in Calvin Hill a few years ago. Robert Newhouse is a functional back but not a big back. Tony Dorsett coughs up the ball too much and he's injury prone. The Cowboys also play in an easier conference and they were fortunate in the Super Bowl last January to be playing Denver—if they had played Oakland or Pittsburgh or New England or even Miami as it finished last season, I feel the Cowboys would have lost. But, and here is an indictment of my own industry, you won't get this kind of talk on the airwaves because the networks have merely hired ex-NFL players as their alleged on-air journalists, which they are not remotely qualified to be. It is an open corruption of the function of journalism on the air. My own two colleagues, Frank Gifford and

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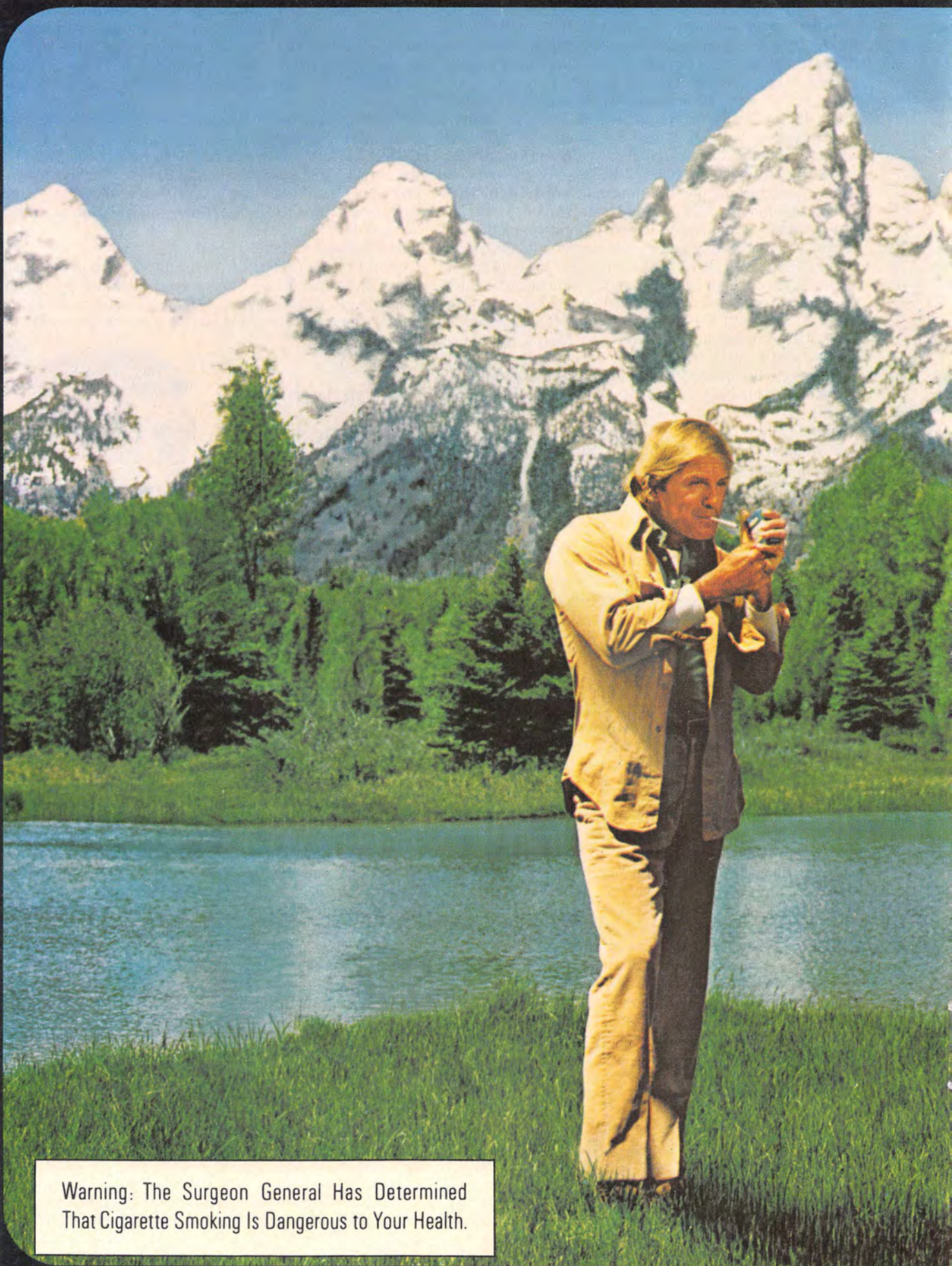
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Don Meredith—and as you know, Frank has been my friend for 25 years—Frank and Don sat together as Dallas routed Baltimore, 38-0, in the opener this season and thought the Cowboys were totally unbeatable. When we went into the booth four weeks later to do the Cowboys' game in Washington, Don said the Cowboys could name the score. Frank agreed with him, but I did not. The Redskins won. I simply don't believe Dallas is anything like that good a team. I think their whole reputation is propaganda.

SPORT: How do you rate other NFL front offices?

COSELL: I think the Dolphins were as good as any when they had Bobby Beathard as their player-personnel director. I think Don Shula would be the first to admit he misses Beathard terribly. I don't think there is anybody in football better for discovery and accurate evaluation of personnel than Bobby Beathard, so Miami doesn't quite have the organization it did. The Los Angeles Rams' organization is up there but the general manager [Don Klosterman] does not have the appropriate authority. That militates against proclaiming that the Rams' front office is on parity with the others.

SPORT: Why doesn't Klosterman have the authority?

COSELL: Because the Rams' owner Carroll Rosenbloom is a very strong man who likes to be in charge. As the owner he has that right, but it works against his general manager, who happens to be one of the very best.

SPORT: Any other outstanding front offices come to mind—Denver's for instance?

“You cannot live in the off-season the way Ken Stabler does and expect to remain at optimum excellence”



COSELL: In my opinion, the Broncos do not have that good a front office. The Pittsburgh Steelers have a good, solid organization. The Chicago Bears have the general manager in Jim Finks who could produce that kind of organization but Jim Finks is inhibited by [George Halas'] 1928-1930 economic philosophy. Finks is a tough negotiator who doesn't pay big salaries. In this day and age, players resent that.

SPORT: Who is the NFL's best quarterback?

COSELL: Bob Griese. I thought he quarterbacked the best football team I've ever seen, the Miami Dolphins that won two consecutive Super Bowl games. I think Bob Griese is mature, sophisticated, has an excellent mentality, excellent emotional discipline. He doesn't lose his poise. I'm not going back to the fundamentals of how a scout rates a quarterback—poise, release and so on. Griese has all of those things. He wouldn't be where he is and have done

what he's done without those. He is, in my mind, the sophisticated quarterback.

SPORT: Isn't he similar to what Bart Starr was for Vince Lombardi in Green Bay—an extension of his coach?

COSELL: I agree with that wholeheartedly. That's a better way to put it—an extension of his coach.

SPORT: Which other quarterbacks impress you?

COSELL: [Raider] Ken Stabler was great, but he's not great anymore. One, the human body is not a rubberband. You cannot live in the off-season the way Ken Stabler does and expect to remain at optimum excellence. He's wild. He doesn't take care of his body. I've discussed this over and over with him and he knows it's true. Two, there's a diversification of interest in the whole of his life—a disordered domestic life, two broken marriages already. These things have an impact upon a human being. It's very difficult for a human being to excel at his work when the major part of his life is fouled up. I've also found Stabler deeply affected by Fred Biletnikoff's decline. He talked to me about it, he felt the Raiders' management is treating Biletnikoff badly. He told me: "Freddy's having a very difficult time of things and it troubles me a great deal." So there are a number of factors involved, but Ken Stabler is not the quarterback he was two years ago.

SPORT: In the Raider management's thinking, is Biletnikoff's decline a matter of age?

COSELL: That's what they think. I'm sure their thinking is accurate. But it's never a good situation. The man has given them great service for 14 years.

SPORT: Which other quarterbacks do you rate highly?

COSELL: I'd put [Viking] Francis Tarkenton third, ahead of [Cowboy] Roger Staubach, because Francis is a more durable and better athlete. [Steeler] Terry Bradshaw deserves to be included; he's won two Super Bowl games. Bert Jones must be mentioned on natural talent but not on achievement. Of the younger quarterbacks, I believe that David Whitehurst of the Green Bay Packers will be very good.

SPORT: Moving to boxing, should Muhammad Ali retire? Or is it too presumptuous for anyone to say he should?

COSELL: I don't suppose anybody on the outside has the right to tell Ali or any man when to get out of his sport. We don't know his responsibilities. We don't know his economic condition.

SPORT: How do you assess his economic condition?

COSELL: I think Ali is in economic distress.

SPORT: Meaning he's broke, or he needs money?

COSELL: He's no longer broke because of his purse [\$3.25 million] for the last Spinks fight. But, yes, he needs money. And he has been broke, in my opinion. But should he retire? In my mind, yes, because he can't fight anymore. He hasn't been able to fight since Manila [in 1975, when Ali defeated Joe Frazier in their third title bout].

SPORT: How do you assess Ali as a person?

COSELL: He's complex, he's ambivalent. He has one of the shortest attention spans of any human being I've ever known—20 seconds at best. He's utterly self-absorbed. And yet he's a phenomenon. He is truly historic. He is one of the few people in sports to have an imprint on the civilization of his time. I have to respect that. This is a man who can barely read or write, and yet he can gravitate with equal grace, engagingly, from social stratum to social stratum—in equal fact from the ghetto to the White House and the Kremlin. Sometimes the things that he spontaneously utters are remarkably dimensional, far above and beyond his absence of literacy and culture. You get a sense that there is somehow, hidden in him, a kind of genius. He has great

generosity and kindness within him. And yet, almost instantly, I've seen him transformed into a person of great cruelty, even sadism. So he is not a man you can depict in a sentence. As an ambivalent man, he produces ambivalent emotions. He couldn't fight against Leon Spinks and yet he tortured his body to where he could move with reasonable grace and swiftness, for his age, for 14 of the 15 rounds, resting only in the ninth. It was not a great fight, but that event was as big a happening as I've seen in my experience in sports.

SPORT: Could he beat Larry Holmes?

COSELL: I wouldn't give him any chance of beating Holmes, not that Holmes is a great fighter.

SPORT: When was Ali's finest hour?

COSELL: I believe his finest hour was on March 8, 1971 against Joe Frazier, their first fight. I've been in sports now, on the air, for 25 years of my life and I know what it takes out of an athlete to be away for even a month. If a baseball player—and baseball, relatively speaking, is a sedentary sport—is away for three months, all we hear about is, he's lost his timing, he's this, he's that. Ali, in the most brutal sport of all, was away for three and a half years and [after bouts with Jerry Quarry and Oscar Bonavena] made a fight against a great fighter. Joe Frazier was a great champion. To me, that was Ali's high point, that he could physically wage the fight he did against a great fighter. I had Ali ahead going into the 11th round when Frazier caught him with the left hook. To me, that was Ali's highlight, that showed his greatness as a fighter.

SPORT: Ali likes to say that when he retires, the game will go to the graveyard.

COSELL: I don't agree with that. Will it lose luster? Yes, but somebody else will come along. That's the way of life.

SPORT: You're a baseball announcer now, but years ago you often said you would never do baseball.

COSELL: I think I said that I would never call a baseball game as a play-by-play announcer. Studiously, in my career, I have eschewed doing play-by-play on anything but boxing. But am I working baseball? Yes, and I enjoy it tremendously.

SPORT: Why?

COSELL: Because the game lends itself to commentation, to anecdotalization. You have airtime you don't have in other sports. I also quite candidly enjoy working *Monday Night Baseball* because of the men in the booth with me. Keith Jackson is a warm, personal friend and a professional announcer. It is much easier to work with a professional announcer than with an ex-athlete. But let me say that Don Drysdale came to me as a man who's paid his dues. He, like Frank Gifford, has been in the business for a long number of years. So there is a professionalism about him. I also have a personal affection for him. And he is a man. Don Drysdale will always speak his mind, which is not true of most ex-athletes.

SPORT: Has the free-agent system been a plus for baseball?

COSELL: I think even Commissioner Bowie Kuhn admitted it's been a plus. He finally admitted it improved the competition rather than decreased it.

SPORT: Then why did he veto the Finley player sales in 1976?

COSELL: Because he made a mistake. He's a stubborn man. Nobody's perfect.

SPORT: Are there rule changes that would aid baseball?

COSELL: I'm not a traditionalist. I think the designated hitter is excellent. I also would have designated runners—you could run for somebody without losing that somebody as a hitter.

SPORT: But wouldn't that be cheapening baseball?

COSELL: That's the traditionalist view, which I respect, but I don't think it would cheapen the game. I think civilization advances. I don't think that either God or Moses, in the Dead Sea Scrolls, commanded that this is the way baseball is, that it's the one thing in the human society that must never change. For years the only rule change in baseball was that the infielders and outfielders must bring their gloves into the dugout each inning. Before that, they left them in the outfield.

SPORT: But the complaint about the DH is that it limits the manager's decisions, thereby tarnishing the appeal of baseball strategy. Wouldn't a designated runner tarnish it even more?

COSELL: There is a point there, obviously. But to me, it's not a compelling point in contrast with the excitement that the change would produce.

“You know how the newspaper strike helped the Yankees—it shut George Steinbrenner up. That's the story”



SPORT: During the playoffs, Jim Palmer mentioned that a factor in the New York Yankees' comeback was the New York newspaper strike and you agreed that Jim was “telling it like it is.” You know the strike had nothing to do with the Yankee comeback.

COSELL: You know how the newspaper strike helped the Yankees—it shut George Steinbrenner up. That's the story there. That's what I meant. Steinbrenner had the team in a rage with his statements. I sat with Steinbrenner and Gabe Paul in Fort Lauderdale a year ago at spring training when Steinbrenner said, “I want Ron Guidry out, I want Roy White out, I don't know why you ever got Willie Randolph, get rid of him.” Is it wrong for the writers to print those statements? Hell, no. But that's what I meant. Somebody asked me later why I didn't explain what I meant on the telecast, but by that time two innings had gone by. I couldn't do it.

SPORT: Speaking of sports in general, is our country better or worse because of TV?

COSELL: It might be worse. Sports on TV, though print has contributed to a degree, has contributed to the most disproportionate and all-pervading emphasis on sports in the average life to where it represents the very opposite of the values it portends to produce.

SPORT: So much for Cosell on sports, Howard. Next month our subject will be Cosell on Cosell.

COSELL: What an utterly fascinating subject, and one with which I am inherently familiar. ■

Boxing's last great trainer..



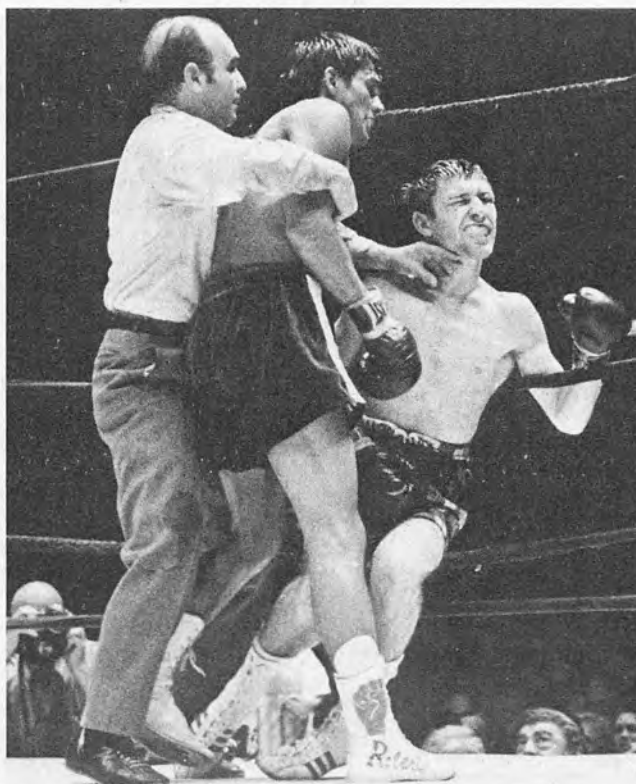
...in the whole wide world is 79-year-old Ray Arcel, whose 18th and final champion, the terrifying Roberto Duran, says with deep affection: "I feel so much for him"

By JERRY IZENBERG

The last great trainer in the whole wide world doesn't smell the stale smoke which hangs like a pall over the arena. He doesn't see the crowd on either side of the narrow aisle or hear the wall of noise which flanks this ritual procession that moves steadily toward the ring.

Trainer Ray Arcel is 79 years old and there is a slight stiffness to his walk as his deep-set eyes focus on lightweight champion Roberto Duran's satin robe and bobbing, towel-draped head.

Arcel's hand rests lightly on the fighter's back. Thousands of similar walks



Duran was wild and undisciplined until Arcel stepped into his corner six years ago—and the Panamanian knocked out Ken Buchanan (at left) to win the lightweight championship.

Across the country more people are losing more inches in 1 to 3 days with Slim-Skins than they could with weeks of dieting!



AFTER
Robin Allen



BEFORE

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Robin Allen

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"Great! Instant reducing—7 inches off waist and abdomen in just one day!"
S. Weston

SALT LAKE CITY:
"Incredible! Lost 6 inches off waist in 3 days."
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"Trimmed waist nearly 7 inches—thighs 4 inches each in just 3 days."
C. Dorne

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"Lost 12 inches the first day—nearly 18 inches in 3 days!"
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NEW ORLEANS:
"Lost over 17 inches in just one day with Slim-Skins!"
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NEW YORK CITY:
"Amazing! Lost 4 inches from waist the very first time I ever tried Slim-Skins!"
Brad Wilson

AFTER
Brad Wilson



BEFORE

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BEFORE

Jeff Nelson, wondering just how fast Slim-Skins can reduce and tighten up a somewhat soft and flabby waistline.

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AFTER

A trimmer, tighter, leaner Jeff Nelson after the very first session.
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Ray Arcel

to a ring have taught the trainer that while you have a physical link with the fighter, you can diagnose the white-hot emotion which bubbles inside him at fight time. That emotion must be shaped and channeled. If it is too intense, it must be restrained. If it is fear, it must be mastered.

But there is no fear with this fighter. Ray Arcel knows that as well as he knows the fact that Duran will do the job for which the trainer has honed him. Arcel knows that as well as he knows the texture of the mouthpiece which he idly fingers in the pocket of his faded cardigan.

Roberto Duran can lick anybody.

Anybody?

Well, almost anybody.

"You are the champion of champions," a man named Carlos Eleta, a Panamanian millionaire who is Duran's manager, tells Roberto one day. "You can destroy anyone."

"No, Carlos," Duran says. "I cannot lick Ray Arcel."

"No," Eleta replies, "that you cannot do—thank God."

Or to put it another way, six years ago Eleta sent a wild, undisciplined child of the streets from Panama to New York City, and a few months later, although Arcel spoke hardly any Spanish and Duran even less English, the trainer sent the fighter back home as the champion of the world. The night Duran won the championship in Madison Square Garden, there was dancing in the streets of Panama City and unabashed amazement in the barrooms of Chorillo, a Panama slum where Duran once slept in the gutters. A week later there was the presentation of the lightweight championship belt for Duran and the highest medal the government of Panama can bestow for Arcel.

"Cholo," Duran's friends said, using the Spanish nickname which refers to his dark features and Indian-style haircut, "how did you do it? You sometimes acted as though you did not know night from day or the ring from a barroom brawl."

"Well, I'll tell you," Roberto said with a smile. "You see there is this crazy old man up in New York City. . . ."

Crazy? Ray Arcel was so crazy that when the New York Golden Gloves crowned its first champion in 1927, a nondescript bantamweight named Terry Roth, Ray Arcel was the man who trained him. He was so crazy that when former lightweight champion Benny Leonard began a comeback in 1931, he brought in Arcel to keep him in shape . . . and when Tony Zale defied the calendar a third time to fight Rocky Graziano 30 years ago, it was Arcel whose folk-medicine techniques put life into Tony's arthritic left arm and who showed him exactly how to regain the middleweight title.

When welterweight champion Barney Ross went out against Henry Armstrong in 1938 and came back defeated and so battered that his features were almost unrecognizable, it was Arcel who spent three days and three nights in a New York hotel room with hot towels and healing hands and did what Ross would trust no doctor to do. It was Arcel who worked the corner opposite Joe Louis 14 times and worked it so well that one night when they met at midring for the referee's instructions, Joe smiled and said, "Oh, man, not you here again." And on the night that Arcel's heavyweight champion, Ezzard Charles, licked Joe, it was Arcel who felt the sadness most because he had hoped that Louis would not tarnish his greatness by fighting after his string had run out.

Put them all together and you come up with 18 champions Arcel has trained in a career which began when Newark and Toledo and Scranton were fight towns . . . when fighters' educations were earned in a squatting old toad of a building called Stillman's Gymnasium on New York's Eighth Avenue . . . when television did not make

Arcel: "If you waste talent you commit a sin; you might as well throw yourself down a sewer"

instant millionaires out of fighters who never learned their trade and were managed by furriers, salesmen, lawyers and anything *but* fight managers.

For nearly four decades Arcel preached his gospel: "It all begins with the left hand. You cannot hook off a jab if you don't know how to jab. You cannot set up the right cross if you don't know how to jab. You cannot double up the hook if you don't know how to use your left hand."

And: "If you waste talent you commit a sin. If you waste talent you might as well throw yourself down a sewer because one day you will be older and you will look at what might have been and you will start to hate yourself."

Four decades of it and then he looked around in 1954 and figured there had to be something more. He never wanted to manage. It was the fighter . . . the art form . . . the teacher-pupil relationship which held his heart. Contract negotiations were somebody else's preserve. He tried a brief fling at promoting but this was in the early 1950s and the people who owned the sport and the bodies in it—the flesh peddlers he so despised—ran him out because they couldn't own him. He put boxing behind him, took a job as a purchasing agent and made a successful career of it.

And then one day in 1972, two men sit-

ting in a Panama restaurant changed it all. They conspired to take Ray Arcel's enormous abilities out of hibernation.

Carlos Eleta is a political as well as financial power in Panama. Everybody is entitled to a hobby, and while some people save stamps, Carlos collects fighters. His best at the time was a junior welterweight named Alfonso "Peppermint" Frazier, who had gone about as far as he could go. That put him in a title match with a dandy Argentinean named Nicolino Loche. Most everyone in Panama agreed that this was a terrible thing to do to a nice fellow like Frazier. "Aiee," they said, "poor Peppermint. He has no chance."

"I want you to find Ray Arcel," Eleta said over lunch to Luis Henriquez, then his New York representative and now the vice-consul general of Panama in New York. "You will find him and he will make Peppermint a champion."

"Ray who? Listen, Carlos, I know them all. I interpreted for Ismael Laguna when he defended his title up there in America. I know Angelo Dundee and Gil Clancy and Manny Gonzales up in the Bronx and other trainers you don't even know. But Ray Arcel I never heard of."

"Now *you* listen," Eleta said. "Years ago I sent fighters to him. He is the greatest trainer in the world. If he's up there alive, you find him."

It took three days of hunting, and when Henriquez called Arcel at home, the retired trainer said, "Look, Mr. Henriquez, it's nice of you to call, but that's behind me. I'm 73 years old. I do not train fighters any more. I hardly ever even go to fights any more. Thank you and give Carlos my regards, but I have a job and a good life and I'm not interested. I wish all of you luck and if there is ever anything I can do for you, let me know."

"You can do something for me, all right," said Henriquez. "Fix it so that I don't have to go back and tell him I didn't even see you. Have lunch with me."

A week later Ray Arcel was on a plane to Panama. "I'll just take a look and maybe I can make a suggestion or two," he told Henriquez.

"Yes, just a suggestion or two," Luis said.

"I go down to Panama just to do a favor for an old friend," Arcel explains. "But right away I like Peppermint. He tries to get the most out of what he has. Maybe I can do a little more for him. But first I have to see the other guy. I really don't know much about Loche."

"Well, they had assigned me this driver called 'Chickelets' and he tells me I can't see Loche because nobody can see him. He works in secret. I know that as long as I'm there I can't send this kid Peppermint in against the unknown."

Arcel told the driver to take him to the cheapest clothing store in town. He bought a flowered shirt, work slacks and sneakers. The next stop was a drugstore



Arcel's partner is 71-year-old Freddie Brown, who (cigar ever-clenched between his teeth) handles the conditioning of Duran (working out on the heavy bag).

for cheap sunglasses. "Look, Chicketles . . . now I real Panamanian . . . no? Now you sneak me in there."

"Señor, you got a deal."

"I get inside the gym," Arcel recalls, "and right away I know our man Peppermint has a problem. This Loche is excellent. He is a good mechanic but I get a feeling there's something more there. Then I see it. He is backing away and the sparring partner is moving in. Now Loche misses a left hand and leans back and he's on the ropes and I can't figure what the hell he's trying to do."

"The kid moves to him and then I really see it for the first time—the real rope-a-dope. He grabs this kid, pulls him in, spins him around and now the positions are reversed and he's beating hell out of the kid."

"So I go back to Frazier and I watch him and I don't really say anything to him until the night before the fight. I tell Frazier that he can forget the jab because he couldn't land one on this Loche with a machine gun. Now I can see Peppermint's scared and he wants to know what to do."

"Now you listen," Arcel told him, "and no matter how it sounds, you do it. You walk out there in the center of the ring when the bell rings and you throw the biggest right hand you ever threw in your life. I don't even care if it lands . . . just so he knows you've got one. Then he will feint and slide back to the ropes."

"Now, you are home and you are the hero, so you remember this. There will be 20,000 Panamanians there. When he goes to the ropes you step back to the center of the ring and laugh at him. Now those 20,000 Panamanians will have seen you throw the right hand. They will know you came to fight. So don't follow him. Make

him come off the ropes. If he doesn't, 20,000 Panamanians will do it for you."

And so Peppermint Frazier won his title on a decision, Carlos Eleta had his championship, and thus ended the short, happy comeback of Ray Arcel.

Like hell it did.

Six months before the Frazier-Loche fight, Ray Arcel and his wife Stevie had gone to Madison Square Garden to see Ismael Laguna, a Panamanian, try to regain his lightweight title from Ken Buchanan. Laguna was the king of Panama. He was the prototype of all Panamanian fighters of that era. When he would bounce into the ring, he would shrug the robe off his shoulders and begin to shadowbox. His hands moved like pistons. Panamanians stood on their chairs and cheered till hoarse before his fights even began.

On the same card, a 20-year-old, 135-pound, 5-foot-7 Panamanian named Roberto Duran was scheduled to go eight with a highly professional minor-league welterweight named "Bang Bang" Benny Huertas. People were moving toward the comfort stations and the refreshment stands when Duran climbed into the ring. Arcel sat back to see what Duran had.

The fight was over before it began. Never has a man been knocked stiff so quickly when he was really trying like hell to fight. Duran glued himself to Huertas at the opening bell and Huertas went down for the count—in less than two minutes.

In a burst of joy, Roberto Duran vaulted through the ring ropes, staggered as his feet hit the floor and looked up into the faces of Ray and Stevie Arcel. Stevie kissed him. Ray shook his hand. "You are

very good," Arcel said. "Thank you, thank you," Duran replied.

Arcel had been so impressed by the young lightweight that a month after Peppermint's victory, the trainer was willing to listen when Eleta called to talk about Duran. "Roberto knocks out nine straight guys, Ray," Eleta said, "then he gets in with a guy named Robinson Garcia. He knocks him down in the first round but Garcia gets up. Not only does he get up, he stays. Duran wins a decision and he is furious he didn't finish Garcia. I think now, Ray, you must take him. I think he is worth teaching."

And so it was agreed.

Luis Henriquez and Roberto Duran came to Ray Arcel in New York. They were joined by trainer Freddie Brown. Freddie is 71 and has a face that looks like a collage of all the arenas and all the gyms and all the dressing rooms that Ray Arcel has seen. Because Ray had a steady job outside boxing, the bulk of Duran's physical conditioning would fall to Freddie. It is an arrangement which still exists.

"The first thing Arcel taught Duran was discipline," Henriquez remembers. "Duran had this obsession about Laguna. Laguna was slick. He was the most loved fighter in Panama. Sometimes I think Cholo's rage was because Panamanians didn't appreciate his bang-bang style."

"You are not Laguna," Ray told Duran through an interpreter. "You are Roberto Duran and you will be the lightweight champion of the world if you take time to discover that you have two hands. If you want to be loved, then stop trying to be somebody else and win the title. You will be amazed at how loved you will become in a short time as champion."

Duran was stubborn. One day he and Arcel argued over the use of the right hand and the neglect of the left.

"Freddie," Arcel said to his partner, who is Duran's senior by 44 years, "get in the ring." Then Arcel turned to Duran. "Hit him with that right of yours." Duran hesitated. "Hit him," Ray said.

Duran threw the right. Freddie slipped the punch, which whistled past as Brown slapped Duran in the face.

"I think that was the exact moment Roberto decided that Ray Arcel was the boss," Henriquez said.

But there were other problems. They were training in the Catskills at a blintz palace called the Concord. Duran was homesick. He missed Panama. He missed the easy life. He missed Chafin.

Chafin is a creature of the Panamanian streets who earns his living singing and dancing and making faces in the saloons of Chorillo. He is the one who found Roberto sleeping in the streets and became the father the boy never really had. Chafin took Roberto to the gym, got him fights, was the reason Duran caught Eleta's interest. And now for the first time they were separated. "Cholo needs him," Henriquez told Ar-

Ray Arcel

cel. "Look, Carlos will pay for the ticket and the Garden will pay for the hotel."

"All right," Arcel said. "Get him. But remember this is still a fight camp no matter how the rest of the world treats this business these days."

With Chafin's arrival, Duran threw himself into training. Chafin kept him happy. At nights—unaccustomed to a bed—Chafin slept in the bathtub. He even made Ray laugh. Then, three weeks before Roberto Duran was to meet Ken Buchanan for the title in June, 1972, Arcel called Henriquez aside.

"It's time now. This is the serious time. No more clowns. We aren't ready yet and we better get ready. Chafin has got to go." Duran was angry and hurt.

So Arcel, as always the master tactician, took another approach. "You like this man?" he asked Chafin. "You want to see him be champion? You would do anything to help him?"

"Anything," Chafin said eagerly. "anything."

"All right, now you listen," Arcel told him. "I have a very important job for you. A fighter's bag is like a carpenter's tool kit. Without it, he can't work. You will carry the bag. You will guard the bag. You will protect the bag."

The Chinese Eighth Army couldn't have gotten near Duran's gym bag after that. Chafin was serious but happy. Roberto was happy. Arcel was positively ecstatic. This would be—and he knew better than anyone—a very tough fight.

Ken Buchanan is from Scotland, a man who learned to box in the classic fashion. His jab was a thing of beauty and he could use it to even better advantage against Duran because his reach was almost four inches longer than the Panamanian's. In effect, Duran would be punching at long distance. And, moreover, Buchanan had patience.

If Duran were to have any chance, he would have to forget the blind rage which had made him so tough in the past. For the first time, he would have to follow a plan.

The plan was the oldest of plans in the boxer vs. puncher matchup. It was valid when Ray Arcel first learned it a half-century earlier in the old Stillman's gym, under a master trainer named Doc Bagley. It was from Bagley that he first learned the greatest boxer in the world is a sitting duck if you can take away his legs.

It is called cutting off the ring and it relies on a stalking technique where side-to-side movement is coupled with steady forward progress so that the other guy has nowhere to go except backwards out of the ring or straight ahead into the puncher.

Teaching this to an undisciplined fighter is difficult at best. Teaching it through an interpreter is a miracle. On the night of the

fight they came down the aisle, Duran, Arcel, Brown, Henriquez and Nestor Quinones, Roberto's old down-home trainer. Arcel was insistent on this last. Quinones had been there at the beginning. Arcel insisted he be there on the kind of night that very few trainers ever get to experience. And, of course, Chafin was there guarding the bag.

As they stepped into the arena and moved down the aisle, the shrill sound of Mauricio Smith's flute cut through the babble. It was joined by a trumpet, a saxophone and a percussionist. It was the music of Panama and Duran responded. Underneath Arcel's hand, he could feel Duran's muscles relaxing. He liked what he felt.

Then Buchanan was on his way to the ring and from the other side of the Garden there came the wheeze and puff of a bagpipe band from Kearny, N.J. Arcel could not help but think that in a great many ways this whole night was a throwback to the boxing world which spawned him. It was an ethnic night without violence in the seats. It was two great fighters and it was

Arcel: "Fighters sweat and bleed and usually die broke. Nobody cares. It shouldn't be that way"

Ray Arcel, steeped in the traditions of the days when fight people were professionals, orchestrating yet another title fight.

In the corner before the first bell, a Tower of Babel arose as Arcel and Henriquez shouted instructions in two languages—simultaneously. "Cut off the ring . . . cut it off. . . don't stand there and load up that right hand . . . remember . . . think."

And then Arcel did a strange thing. From directly behind Duran, the trainer leaned through the ropes, put both hands on the challenger's rump and literally slingshot him toward midring an instant before the bell rang. Buchanan looked up in time to see Duran coming. It was a terrifying sight . . . the coal-black eyes . . . the intense expression and, most of all, the speed at which Duran had arrived at ring center. If you didn't know better, you'd have sworn that Arcel had sent his fighter out early.

The first 11 rounds were hell. When Duran remembered the plan, he took the jab away. When he forgot it, he caught machine-gun jabs in the face. In the 12th, while the Tower of Babel screamed its bilingual commands, Duran seemingly went deaf and Buchanan punched the hell out of him. Then, with a lunge, out of in-

stinct, Duran drove his right home. Buchanan was hurt.

Arcel knew it before anyone else. Just prior to the bell for the 13th, he waived Henriquez aside, leaned over Duran's left shoulder, all the while looking at Buchanan. From behind, he lifted Duran off his stool. In a language which suddenly knew no barriers he shouted above the crowd: "You go now . . . no more plan . . . no more wait . . . you go now . . . punch . . . punch . . . punch . . . you come back to me champion."

It did not take long to finish.

Ray Arcel had another champion. The methods were the same ones he has always used. Until a man proved otherwise, Arcel treated him the same as the rest—whether he was a champion or a four-round kid. When he was much younger, Arcel ran with his fighters in the morning and ate the same food they did at night. He closed cuts in the days when a now-illegal liquid coagulant was mixed with damp chewing tobacco to generate a 30-second healing.

Duran knows little of this in terms of name, place, date. But he feels very strongly about the man who made him a champion and who, in truth, has kept him there. In the predawn hours, he will scream at Freddie Brown. "You make me run in the park with the muggers. You are crazy. I want to sleep. I am in the hands of two crazy old men. I will not speak to you for the rest of the day. I will fire you. I will not hire you again until tomorrow."

But he does not scream at Ray Arcel, even in jest.

"Freddie Brown is like my poppa," Duran says. "I can't even go to the bathroom without him peeking. But Ray Arcel, for him I have no words. I feel so much for him. And when he is angry, he says nothing. He only gives me the look. When he gives me the look, then I know it is time to go to work."

Not long ago, one evening in New York City, Ray Arcel said Roberto Duran will surely be his last fighter, and he reflected on the very nature of the business, saying, "Boxing can bring out the worst evil in people. It can be cruel. Fighters sweat and bleed and usually die broke. Nobody cares. It shouldn't be that way. The good ones are artists. The very art form is self-defense. But there are so many people who kill it for them . . . the politicians . . . the commissions made up of political appointments . . . the . . ." And then his voice trailed off.

But Duran will fight again. Arcel will be there. They will come down the aisle once more. And in that moment, there will be no politicians, no commissions, no hustlers. There will be just the two of them—an odd couple—two professionals in a world where the value of pride and talent is rapidly diminishing. The greatest fighter among the lightweights and the last great trainer in the whole wide world. ■

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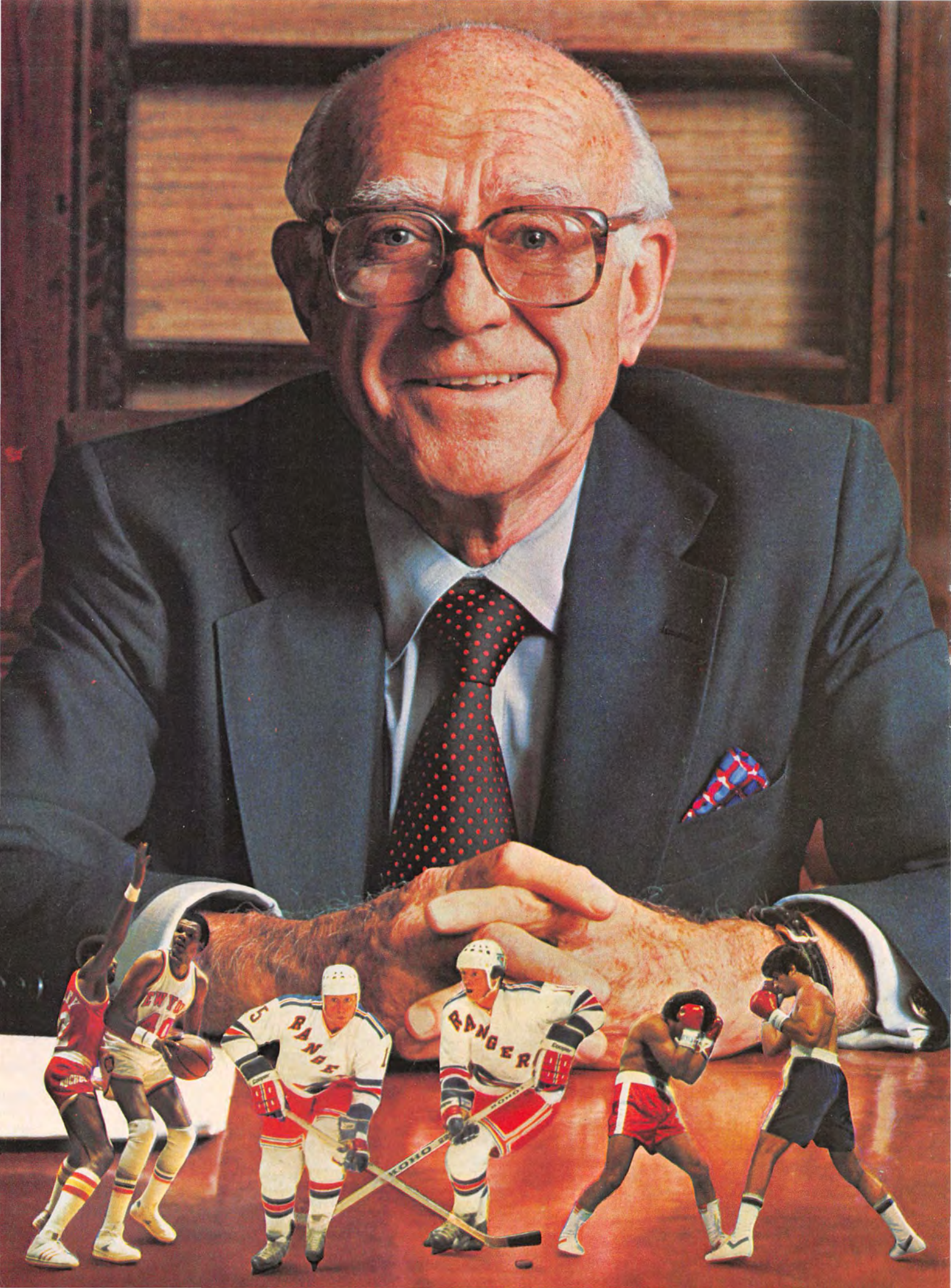


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The czar of Madison Square Garden

In between picking up napkins off the Garden floor, Sonny Werblin shelled out millions to rebuild the Knicks and Rangers.

Then, to upgrade his boxing program, he signed on wily Don King, but told him: "Don't try to hustle a hustler"

By MARTY BELL

For a week I've been trying to catch up with Sonny Werblin. I want to hang out with the self-proclaimed hustler whom Gulf & Western has brought in to rebuild the image of its newest acquisition, Madison Square Garden. Werblin is the master builder who made a star of Sinatra, managed the careers of Gable, Gleason, Burns and Benny, invented the packaging of television shows, transformed the bankrupt New York Titans into the world champion Jets and turned a New Jersey swamp into the \$340-million Meadowlands sports complex. Now I want to find out what he plans to do with the Garden's most visible and, recently, most disappointing holdings, the Knicks and the Rangers. But I can't find out anything if I don't nail the man down. He's 68 years old, has survived two heart attacks and continues to run at 78 rpm in a world that moves at 33½.

During the first week in October he went to Washington to buy the Diplomats of the North American Soccer League for the Garden Corporation, went on to Chicago for the NASL meetings, came back to Manhattan for a party for New York Governor Hugh Carey, caught the Rangers preseason game with the Boston Bruins, went back to Washington to hold a press conference to announce the soccer acquisition, came right back to New York for the opening of a new restaurant he brought to the Garden complex, then saw the Knicks get beat by the Philadelphia 76ers. I tried to get to him at that game, but he kept leaving the arena to meet with people and make business calls.

Werblin's open-checkbook policy obtained such high-priced talent as (from left) Webster for the Knicks, Hedberg and Nillson for the Rangers, and lightweight champion Mike Rossman (far right) for big-time fights.

At midnight after the basketball game, a bomb went off in the Garden complex, spraying glass all over the street. An anti-Castro group claimed the blast was in protest of the coming night's boxing contest between the American amateur team and the national team of Cuba. The morning after the explosion Werblin was down at the site of the bombing, picking through the rubble in his Brooks Brothers suit, helping the police find the explosive device. Then he ran up to the Lake Isle Country Club (which he owns) in Eastchester to have lunch with the Rangers.

It's an hour before the first boxing match and Werblin's back at the Garden hosting a party for the Cuban dignitaries in the softly lit Penn Plaza Club. There's some tension in this room, the residue of the bombing. Cuban sports minister Georgio Bango, an olive-skinned man built like a tire iron, goes to the bar and gets himself a drink. He turns and finds himself eye-to-eye with Werblin. Werblin, who was born on St. Patrick's Day, combines the impishness of a leprechaun with the polish of a diplomat. His 5-foot-6 frame is covered with pinstripes, he wears a silk tie and tortoiseshell glasses, he has manicured fingernails and a suntanned, bald dome. Bango smiles faintly. Werblin smiles back, a mischievous smile. Then, in a grainy voice loud enough to interrupt nearby conversations, Werblin says, "Goddamn Communist. He goes to get himself a drink but doesn't offer one to anyone else. He opens a pack of cigarettes, takes one, but doesn't offer one to anyone else. Boy, are you Commies stingy. That's because you don't know about money. I gotta teach you about money."

Bango laughs so hard his drink spills, and everyone else around joins in.

Werblin continues his tension-scattering act. He spots Don King, the boxing

huckster with the watermelon belly and the wheatfield of gray hair whom Werblin has recently engaged to promote fights at the Garden. Werblin takes his freckled hands out of his pockets and grabs King, saying, "Get over here, you black bastard. We gotta teach these Communists about money."

King laughs, a soprano laugh that seems alien to his large body. Then he bends over and whispers in Werblin's ear. "We gotta talk, Sonny. I got the word on some horses and I want you to go in with me. You're the messiah in that business."

"Listen to him," Werblin says and he points a finger at King as if lecturing a child. "I told you a hundred times, King. Don't try to hustle a hustler."

More soprano laughter from King. Now Werblin pulls over Michael Burke, the president of Madison Square Garden Center, a man whose trademark is his turban of white hair. The small, bald Werblin poses between the two large, hirsute men. "I only have one nightmare in life," Werblin says. "Being photographed between these two guys." He flashes a puckish grin.

The room is filled with laughter. The tension has been swept away by Sonny Werblin, the MC of life around him. He leaves 'em laughing and dashes out of the club. "Gotta make sure the building's ready for tonight's show," he says. He walks briskly through the Garden's still-empty cement halls, up and down the stairwells, checking that certain doors are locked, that uniformed guards are at those that are open—and picking up every napkin he comes upon. "Always give them a clean theater," he says. "Everyone has to be as comfortable as they can be. With me, every night is opening night."

Once the building's inspected, Werblin can stop—briefly—and get a quick drink in his executive suite, the one he just redeco-

Sonny Werblin

rated. "Classed up the joint, huh," he says to an assemblage of AAU officials who compliment the decor. Sure did. During the summer, the Garden's off-season, Werblin redecorated the lockerrooms ("Now they have a clubhouse instead of a lockerroom. When the Rangers saw the place, they left me a love note"), the press lounge ("I was a writer once and I liked to work in comfort"), the executive offices ("Good workers spend more time in the office than at home, so the office should be nicer than home") and kicked the pre-Werblin concessionaire out of the Garden complex restaurant and brought in Restaurant Associates, who opened Charlie O's ("There hasn't been a hangout for athletes in this town since the old Toots Shor's; now they got one").

After inspecting the bar and the buffet in the executive suite, Werblin sits on a beige couch holding a glass of vodka. He must down half-a-dozen shots of vodka a night, but his demeanor remains unaffected. He's naturally souped up.

"This is the most famous arena in the world," Werblin says. "And we should take pride in that fact. It has to be as beautiful and comfortable as it can possibly be. And it has to be filled with stars. My whole life has been selling tickets. And if I know one thing, it's that stars are the only thing that sells tickets. It's what you put on the stage that draws people."

So the new president and chief operating officer of the Madison Square Garden Corporation has refurbished the sports programs, handing out the big bucks to bring in the stars.

To run the Rangers, Werblin hired Fred Shero, formerly the coach of the Philadelphia Flyers and one of the best minds in hockey. That deal cost Sonny a million dollars for five years. But you won't see the coach on the ice, so Werblin also signed the Swedish superstars, Ulf Nilsson and Anders Hedberg, fast-skating, good-looking ex-Winnipeg Jets of the World Hockey Association. They cost another \$2.4 million over two years. For the Knicks he acquired 7-foot-1 center Marvin ("The Human Eraser") Webster, who became nationally known last June when his former team, the Seattle Supersonics, sneaked into the National Basketball Association playoff finals. Webster is getting \$3 million over five years. And to fatten up the boxing program, Werblin made an agreement with Don King—the most flamboyant character in the game next to Muhammad Ali—to co-promote fights at the Garden. God knows what that one will cost. But Sonny says success costs money.

It has been only ten months since this storm called Sonny Werblin took over the monolithic Madison Square Garden Cor-

poration. Gulf & Western Industries, a multinational conglomerate, is his boss, or as he puts it, his banker. And he has to supervise the Knicks and Rangers, the boxing program, Roosevelt and Arlington Race Tracks, five editions of Holiday on Ice, a theatrical production company, and now the Washington Diplomats. Each has its own administrators, its own stars. But every place you look you see Sonny Werblin. He has given the Garden and its parts one personality—his personality.

"My theory is that we shouldn't work for this building," he says. "The building should work for us. I'm going to make it so that people cannot resist coming here."

With that, Werblin pops up from the couch and hurries to watch the boxing matches in the arena. There he finds that people have managed to stay away. The place is only half full. He blames the New York newspaper strike and the TV publicity of last night's bombing. And when a welterweight American boxer is cut by his Cuban opponent two minutes into the first round, Werblin becomes irate. "That's an outrage," he says. "Who gets cut in two

Werblin: "I became disenchanted with Reed...because of the remarks he made"

minutes? What kind of show is that for the fans?"

Jack Krumpe, Werblin's right-hand man at the Meadowlands and now the executive vice-president of the Garden Corporation, tells me: "If you want to talk to Sonny, get him in his car. It's the only place he sits still. And there's no phone."

So I arrange to ride with Werblin to a welcome luncheon for the Rangers thrown by some politicians in Westchester, where the team now practices. I meet Werblin at the Waldorf Towers residence he shares with his wife of 40 years, Leah Ray, who was once the singer with the Phil Harris band that Sonny was an agent for. Werblin comes into the mirrored lobby dressed in his pinstripes. Before we can get going, he has to make a few calls on the concierge's phone. When we finally climb into the back of his brown Cadillac limousine, Werblin says, "Now you got me. Ask me anything."

The first thing I want to know is what the hell is Sonny Werblin doing at Madison Square Garden. After all, for the past six years he had been in direct competition with the Garden as the chairman of the New Jersey Sports and Exposition Authority. His Meadowlands Race Track took business away from Roosevelt Race-

way, which produces 60 percent of the Garden Corporation's net income. And he had completed plans for an arena where the Nets and Islanders eventually will play. Werblin coming to the Garden seemed as unlikely as Tommy Lasorda changing his blood from Dodger blue to Yankee blue.

But Werblin finds no conflict of interest in his move to the Garden. "Good competition helps everyone," he says. "Two theaters are better on one block. So are two restaurants. I consider myself a citizen of the megalopolis. I grew up in Brooklyn, spent four wonderful years at Rutgers, have always lived in Manhattan and maintained a summer home in New Jersey. I work for the entire area. And besides, I think that these changes I make are great fun."

Werblin has always been a mover and shaker, a constant man-in-motion. While with the MCA talent agency, he was an agent for the big bands, and when television became the rage, moved to that department and created the package deal (grouping a concept, writer and star before selling a show to a network).

Werblin left MCA after 30 years and, along with his partners in Monmouth Race Track, bought the New York Titans. "Successful entertainment is based on habit," he says. "Vaudeville was a success when people knew there would be a new show every Monday. Movies peaked when people knew there would be a new show in the local theaters every Tuesday. Then watching TV series became the habit. But television turned to specials and schedule shifting. Meanwhile, professional football had Sundays locked up. It became the habit, so I went with the trend."

Werblin overhauled the team, named it the Jets, brought in Weeb Ewbank as coach and turned quarterback Joe Namath into a star just by writing him a check for \$427,000 and making him the highest-paid rookie in all of sports. Werblin became the AFL's loudest defender. And he always set up the team across the river, the New York Giants, as the enemy.

Though Werblin was the Jets' president, he was only a minority stockholder, but he told his partners that he would run the team his way or leave. In 1967, the partners had the most serious of many disagreements, this one over Ewbank. Against Werblin's wishes, his partners wanted to dump what they thought was an over-the-hill coach. Werblin sold his piece of the team in May, 1968, and the remaining owners decided to stick with Ewbank for one more year. That season the Jets won the Super Bowl.

Just three years later, Werblin stood at a press conference beside his former competitor, Wellington Mara, the owner of the Giants. There Werblin announced that he was the Giants' new landlord; they were moving to his to-be-built stadium in the

New Jersey Meadowlands.

"Even though you have a history of these moves," I say to Werblin, "you were so tied to the Meadowlands that the move to the Garden seems startling."

"The Meadowlands is the most gratifying thing I have ever done," he says, looking out the car window. He points to a workman climbing out of a sewer hole in the Manhattan streets and says, "I took a hole like that in the Meadowlands and made it something beautiful. In the beginning everyone said it was a pipe dream of mine, which was enough to egg me on. A few years ago, no one wanted any part of the project because they thought we would fail. But then I began to sense a political atmosphere there and the New



Sonny likes hobnobbing with stars such as comedian Chevy Chase and Joe Namath, who once led Werblin's Jets.

Jersey governor was trying to enlarge my organization to increase the number of political appointees. We were able to get so much done because we were so small. Now, the fun was gone."

Werblin officially resigned from the New Jersey job on December 6, claiming he was retiring to raise horses. One week later he was at a press conference at The "21" Club announcing his plans for the Garden.

It is no surprise that Gulf & Western Industries—which became partners with the Garden Corporation in Roosevelt Raceway in 1969 and seven years later had obtained 100 percent of the Garden stock and made it a subsidiary—went after Sonny Werblin. The best of times at the Garden have been when it was run by flashy impresarios—from boxing promoter Tex Rickard in the Roaring Twenties to basketball promoter Ned Irish in the 1940s—men whose mere presence created excitement. But the three men who have presided over the Garden in the past 15 years have been low-profile moneymen: Irving Mitchell Felt was an investment banker, Phil Levin was a land developer and Alan Cohen, Werblin's predecessor, was a tax lawyer.

Finances necessitated their presence; the Garden building itself has an overhead

of \$20 million and, no matter how successful the Knicks and Rangers are, is at best a break-even operation. And so the Garden Corporation has had to expand into racetracks and real estate to realize any profit.

But in August, 1977, when Gulf & Western gained control, Charlie Bluhdorn, the chairman and chief operating officer, transferred the Garden's real-estate holdings to another division of his company. He wanted the Garden Corporation to be strictly sports and entertainment. Profits would come from the racetracks, touring shows and the acquisition of additional sports properties. And the arena itself, whatever its financial problems, would serve as the company jewel, whose very name would attach prestige and excitement to anything associated with it.

In recent years, the Garden has been a tarnished jewel. As Michael Burke says, "Any place that is so identified with two teams, as the Knicks and Rangers, loses its aura when those teams are not successful." The Rangers have finished last in their division for the last three years. The Knicks missed the playoffs two years ago and were eliminated in four straight losses to the Philadelphia 76ers last year.

"At the Garden we needed someone who could build sports teams and knew something about other entertainment," says a Gulf & Western spokesman. "And, though this seemed like asking for the impossible, it would be nice if that person knew something about racing. There was one man who knew all those things—Sonny Werblin."

"Sure the Garden needed you," I say to Werblin as we drive past Yankee Stadium on our way to Westchester County. "But why did you take this job at this stage of your life?"

He squints at me like I am out of my mind, laughs, then says, "Look, I find that I work just as hard at playing as at working, so I might as well be working. I didn't need the money. [He reportedly gets \$225,000 a year.] But I thought it would be fun. It's another challenge."

At the press conference when he first announced his plans for the Garden, Werblin called the Knicks and Rangers, "teams without pride." When I ask him to explain this, he becomes very animated, waving his tiny hands in the air. "The Rangers were the most thoroughly disorganized, unprofessional operation I have ever seen," Werblin says. "The front office had no control over the situation. At practices, players were absent or late or sitting in the corners brooding. I had a couple of meetings with [former general manager] John Ferguson, but he just didn't know what was going on. He lacked decisiveness. He's not my kind of guy. It's always tough to fire people. But look at it another way—they shouldn't have been hired in the first place."

"As for the Knicks, I became slightly disenchanted with [coach] Willis Reed,

not because of his coaching—you cannot judge a coach off one season—but because of the remarks he was making. He had set up a *we and they* situation between himself and management. He could not win unless *they* got him a center, unless *they* got him players. That's immature, dammit. Willis isn't a player anymore. He's part of the *they*."

Werblin spent his first six months on the job, the remainder of last season, in the background, observing, seeking opinions from people who knew basketball and hockey. After the seasons ended, he began to make his moves.

First, he announced that no one in either organization was assured of a job except Michael Burke, despite the fact that Burke, though intelligent and presentable, had failed in a few opportunities to get high-quality players for the Garden teams, particularly the Knicks. Burke admits that while the basketball merger talks were in progress, Roy Boe, then owner of the Nets, offered to *give* the Knicks Julius Erving in lieu of paying a territorial indemnity, but Burke turned down the offer fearing that the fans would never forgive the Knicks for ruining the Nets. A few weeks later, Boe ruined his team anyway—he sold Erving to Philadelphia in order to get money for the indemnity. Werblin and Burke deny it, but people close to the situation claim that Burke was assured of his Garden job because he recommended Werblin to Bluhdorn.

Then Werblin set out to find the right men to run the Knicks and the Rangers for him. "The right man doesn't mean just any man," he insists. "I was not going to hire someone just to have a new face." But two of the right men just happened to be available. Fred Shero, the coach of the Philadelphia Flyers, was feuding with his boss, Ed Snider, and ready to leave that organization. And Red Auerbach, the president of the Boston Celtics, was unsure of his status with new owner, John Y. Brown, the fast-food franchisor. When Werblin heard this, he decided to get Shero and Auerbach.

Getting Shero was easy. He wanted to come. Shero wanted an operation that he could run without interference. "We don't have to worry about the Rangers any more," Werblin says.

Auerbach seemed just as easy. He came to New York to see Werblin and accepted an offer to become president of the Knicks. "He didn't offer me money I couldn't get elsewhere," Auerbach says, "but I was so impressed with the way he treated me. I just knew that he was a real professional and I was anxious to work with him. But I came back to Boston to pack and got a reaction I never expected. People on the street begged me to stay. I love those people."

Auerbach supposedly came back to New York to sign a contract. Instead, he told Werblin, "I'm very embarrassed. My

Sonny Werblin

word is my life. But I just can't leave those people in Boston."

"Right then, Sonny read me like a book," Auerbach now says. "He understood just how I felt. Negotiating with him was one of the most flattering and memorable things that ever happened to me in sports. The man is the ultimate professional."

With Auerbach out and no one else of that caliber around, Eddie Donovan, who would have been the general manager under Auerbach, remained in charge of the operation. "Eddie recommended keeping Willis Reed," Werblin says, "and I went along with this after voicing my complaints to Willis. I never talked to any other coach."

Though Werblin will stay out of other player maneuvers, it was inevitable when he took this job that he would immediately try to bring in some new stars. "But only the stars the coaches want," Sonny says. Without new faces to encourage the fans, all his other changes at the Garden would go unnoticed. Again Werblin was fortunate—stars were available.

The Rangers were among 15 NHL teams in the bidding for Hedberg and Nilsson, who had become free agents after leading the Winnipeg Jets to the WHA title. When Werblin offered each Swede \$600,000 a year for two years, everyone else dropped out.

Though Werblin admonished Reed for crying publicly for a center, he knew the coach was right. Reed's first choice was either Darryl Dawkins of Philadelphia or Marvin Webster, who had played out his option with Seattle. Dawkins was out because Fitz Dixon, the Philadelphia owner, refused to trade anyone to the Knicks. After a meeting in New York, Webster narrowed his choice to either New York or Seattle. In the interim, Bill Walton announced he would never again play for Portland. With his history of injuries and his sensitivity to hostile crowds—which Garden crowds can be—the Knicks did not feel Walton was really right for them. "I was never too interested in Walton," Werblin says. "But I had to make a play because he was available. You have to try everything. People forget that when I signed Namath I also signed John Huarte of Notre Dame." So Burke and Donovan visited Walton in Portland.

The Knicks were not disappointed when Walton announced he wanted to play for Golden State. But they were shattered when Webster announced he was staying in Seattle. "I don't usually get hot but I did that day," Werblin says. "I was mostly mad at myself for not being more involved in the negotiations."

Within a few days, though, Supersonics owner Sam Schulman lowered his pre-

vious offer to Webster, who then decided to join the Knicks.

Despite Webster's presence, the Knicks are still plagued by disorganization and indecision. And Werblin must take the responsibility for not finding the right man to run the team and build the organization. There is speculation that Auerbach will never get along with Brown. And as one Garden official says, "If Red knocks on our door in February, he's got a job."

In many ways, Werblin has been lucky—he has benefited from the availability of players and coaches, and from the stability provided by the Gulf & Western takeover. Nevertheless, it is remarkable that in his very first off-season, Sonny Werblin was able to obtain Shero, Hedberg, Nilsson and Webster.

These popular acquisitions and Werblin's charm will carry him for a while. But he certainly has not yet put together championship-caliber teams. And if he does not do it quickly, his charm may wear thin on his Gulf & Western bosses, as it did on his Jet partners. For now, though, Werblin

When Werblin offered each Swede \$600,000 a year, all other bidders dropped out

has a free hand at the Garden.

As his car pulls into the Inn of Westchester, I ask Werblin how he has been able to make so many changes so quickly. Matter of factly, as if I asked him the time, he says, "I'm used to getting what I want," then he hops out of his car.

It is opening night at Roosevelt Raceway. And if the opening of the new season is not enough to get you there, you'll also find in attendance Sammy Kaye and his Swing-and-Sway Orchestra, a new discotheque complete with betting windows surrounding the dance floor, fireworks and the New York Rangers. Yes sir, Sonny Werblin, the man who spent the past few years trying to lure you to the Meadowlands instead of Roosevelt, knows how to win your heart. This night at Roosevelt nearly 50 percent more people will come out and bet nearly 50 percent more money than at last year's opening.

The brown Cadillac limousine pulls up and the man himself gets out. He's followed by Leah Ray and the youngest of their three sons.

Sonny takes his family up to the Cloud Casino dining room, which he's completely redecorated. Leah Ray says it's beautiful. "It has to be," Sonny says. "I made the Meadowlands so beautiful that I

had to make this place more beautiful."

Sonny greets the Rangers, asking Jack Krumpke some of the names. He embraces them all like long-lost friends. He introduces Krumpke and some friends to 65-year-old Sammy Kaye. "One of my very first clients. Bet you thought he was dead." And then Werblin's off again, quick as the trotters. He inspects the grandstand, the pressbox, the disco. He's disgusted that there are beer cups all over the floor. He calls over a porter to clean up the place.

He returns to the Cloud Casino. A woman at his table says, "Gee, Sonny. I gotta go see the ladies' room. I bet it's beautiful."

Werblin pats her on the head and says knowingly, "It is."

A few nights later, it is opening night for the Rangers. In the first period, Fred Shero's new team scores three unanswered goals against Fred Shero's old team, the Flyers. Between periods, in his executive suite, Sonny Werblin's practically jumping up and down, telling everybody it's the best period the Rangers have played in ten years. The game ends in a 3-3 tie, but Sonny is still encouraged.

After the game, Werblin, his wife and associates go down to Charlie O's. There isn't an empty seat in the house. And many of them are filled with Rangers. "Well, will you look at this!" Werblin says with delight. It appears that he's built his sports hangout.

By 2:30, everyone else has gone home, but Sonny and his entourage are still sitting. He puts vodka in his mouth and ideas come out, such as buying a major-league baseball team and an NFL team for the Garden. They wouldn't have to be in New York, of course. "But I would prefer if they were," Werblin says. Right now the NFL doesn't want owners owning other sports teams. "But that's gonna change," Sonny says. "Pete [Rozelle] knows it. Corporations are the only ones who can afford teams today." Werblin smiles and drinks and you can tell what he's thinking: He'd love to get the Jets back. And while he's at it, why not the Mets, too. He keeps thinking and drinking. But I'm exhausted from chasing the man around for a week. I tell him that and he says, "I'm gonna make a bum of you yet."

"This place is like a toy to you," I say. "You're really having a ball."

"If I wasn't working, I'd be hanging out like this anyway," he says. "I've retired three times, but never again. If I ever retire again, please don't believe me."

He sees that the others at the table are getting groggy. They can't leave before him. So he finishes his sixth glass of vodka in one gulp, bangs his glass on the table and gets up. On the way out, he grabs me by the arm and says, "You know what I like about this job? Every day is like opening a box of Cracker Jacks. I never know what I'm gonna find."

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THREE — YOU COMPLETELY DEFEAT THE GREATEST SINGLE CAUSE OF FAT BUILD-UP, runaway appetite and overeating. Because the moment you take this doctor's **CAPSULE**, ravenous hunger disappears. Gnawing appetite is switched off . . . you lose your craving for food for hours at a time.

More significant . . . when you do eat on this Doctor's **CRASH-LOSS** diet and **Lifetime-Slim** maintenance program, since your body completely **NEUTRALIZES THE FAT-BUILDING EFFECT OF ALL THE CALORIES IN THE FOOD YOU EAT**, excess fat simply cannot form . . . stored-up body fat burned off and melted away by the hour — and you continue to **grow slimmer instead of fatter after each meal you eat!**

DOCTOR ADVISES: USE THIS CRASH-BURN PROGRAM ONLY WHILE YOU'RE OVERWEIGHT . . . OTHERWISE YOU MIGHT GROW TOO THIN! Of course, there is one thing you must keep in mind. You cannot use this **CAPSULE CRASH-BURN PROGRAM** indefinitely . . . otherwise, you might become overly thin.

Also, as long as you are on this **ANTI-CALORIE** Program you cannot stuff and gorge yourself silly on over-rich, high-fat foods. There is a reasonable limit on just how fast medical science can help you safely burn away fat. **BUT —** and here's the very heart of this wondrous development: Because this thrilling **ANTI-CALORIE** concept not only helps you neutralize the effect of the calories in all the food you eat . . . but **ALSO** puts gnawing appetite to sleep . . . you simply lose that driving urge, that maddening craze to make fattening food the very center of your existence . . . thanks to this medically proven formula that contains the most powerful reducing aid ever approved for release to the public, without a prescription, by the United States Government!

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In her first year on the LPGA tour,
Nancy Lopez set records by winning five successive tournaments
and more money than any rookie golfer ever.
But she also experienced a terrible slump,
and now says,

"I don't want to be a one-year sensation"

By DICK SCHAAP

The scallops were small, bite-size, which was a good thing, because it meant she could eat one at a time before the next man or the next woman or the next couple stopped at her table, asked for her autograph, wished her luck and told her how lovely she was and how sensational her golf game was. Each time someone stopped, Nancy Lopez beamed. Her brown eyes sparkled. The 21-year-old daughter of a Mexican-American auto-body-shop owner acted as though she always carried on conversations with strangers between bites of her dinner.

"We hope you win," a middle-aged woman in a green dress said as her husband stood at her side. "Ray here, he's a real good golfer, too. You should see all the trophies he's won."

Nancy Lopez smiled a full, rich smile, as though she really did want to see Ray's trophies. She probably did. All the attention she was getting was still new and delicious: In a few weeks, she might beg for a couple of minutes alone, she might dream of a taste of privacy, but at this point, in the middle of June, 1978, sitting at a corner table in a restaurant adjoining The Depot Motor Inn just outside Rochester, N.Y., Nancy Lopez was absolutely delighted to be the center of attention.

Yes, Nancy said to the woman in green, she appreciated the kind words and she, too, hoped that in the next few days she would play well enough to win the Bankers Trust Classic at the Locust Hill Country Club down the road from the motel. Nancy

said she would very much like to win her fifth successive Ladies Professional Golf Association tournament.

LPGA. Suddenly the letters stood for the Lopez Personal Golf Association. Only two months earlier, Nancy Lopez had been a reasonably anonymous athlete, known as a promising rookie to the handful of Americans who followed the women's golf tour, unknown to the millions of Americans who followed most sports casually and women's sports less than casually.

The LPGA tour was in no danger of overexposure in early 1978. There were no legitimate superstars on that tour; at best there was a semicelebrity named Jan Stephenson, a blond Australian who drew as much attention for her figure as for the low scores she sometimes shot.

And falling below Stephenson's semicelebrity status is the LPGA's rank and file: Laura Baugh, known for her TV-commercial smile and her Barbie-doll beauty; Jane Blalock, for the charges of cheating she had fought off; Carol Mann, for being tall; and JoAnne Carner, for being good. They were all well known in their own set, but they weren't full-blown national figures; not one of them, not yet.

The women's tennis tour had adopted and fulfilled the slogan, "You've Come a Long Way, Baby," but the women's golf tour, despite more and improving players, despite growing prize money, despite the benevolence of the Colgate company and the encouragement of Dinah Shore, had come such a short way that by the mid-1970s the most famous of all woman golfers was still the late Babe Didrikson Zaharias, who had finished her final round a quarter of a century earlier.

When Nancy Lopez burst upon the

scene in the spring of 1978, she raised the consciousness of the whole country and single-handedly lifted women's golf to a new level of acceptance. What Lopez did on the golf tour was more than glamorous. It was awesome.

Her winning streak began in mid-May at the Greater Baltimore Classic, where she earned her third victory of the young year. She led after the first two rounds and eventually won by three strokes. The following week, in New Jersey, in the Coca-Cola Classic, Lopez started the final round three strokes behind JoAnne Carner, one of the most successful woman golfers of the mid-1970s.

Carner was Lopez' hero, the woman golfer she most admired. The year Nancy was born, 1957, Carner won the United States Amateur Championship; she won that title five times before Nancy reached her teens. But in May, 1978, Carner shot a 73 on her final round, Nancy shot a 70, and on the first hole of a sudden-death playoff, Nancy shot a par 4, Carner a bogey 5—and the title belonged to Lopez.

The next week, Lopez again overtook her hero. This time, in the Golden Lights Classic in New Rochelle, N.Y., Carner's lead entering the final round was merely two strokes. Four strokes would not have been a sufficient cushion. Nancy shot a closing 65—"The best round I've ever played," she said—and Carner shot a 70; Nancy had her third victory in a row, her fifth of 1978.

The following week there was no women's tournament in the U.S. Lopez skipped a tour stop in Canada to begin concentrating on her next event, a major tournament, the 24th LPGA championship, a perfect showcase for her fourth straight victory. And that victory turned

With her spectacular play, Nancy (here with her caddy, Roscoe Jones) was able to lift women's golf to a new level.

Nancy Lopez

out to be the most decisive of all. The margin was six strokes, and during the second round, when she demoralized the rest of the field, Lopez played one stretch of nine holes in eight strokes less than par. The Lopez Legend was born. The media barrage began.

The morning the Bankers Trust Classic started outside Rochester, the morning Nancy Lopez began her bid to become the first player ever to win five successive tournaments on the LPGA tour, reporters from the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post* and the *Boston Globe* were all in the press room, dueling for time alone with Nancy. Each of the reporters was a newcomer to the women's golf tour; their newspapers had never before felt the need to send staff reporters to cover a regular LPGA event in a distant city.

NBC Sports was on hand, too, getting ready to break into its Saturday baseball game and its Sunday *Sports World* show with up-to-the-minute reports on Nancy's quest. Among the passengers aboard a plane landing in Rochester the morning of the first round was Dan Rather, one of the anchormen on CBS's *60 Minutes*.

"You here to cover Nancy?" Rather was asked.

"No," Rather said a bit wistfully. "Another story. But I wish I were."

Nancy. That was all, just one name providing full identification—and that tells you how much she meant to the women's golf tour. On the men's tour, there were Arnie, Jack, Gary, Lee. They didn't need last names. On the women's tennis tour, there were Chris, Martina, Evonne, Billie Jean. And now women's golf had Nancy.

Once the Bankers Trust Classic was played in relative obscurity, but in 1978 the event averaged more than 10,000 people for the first three days, 90 percent of them drawn by the thought of watching Nancy Lopez make golf history. On the morning of the opening day, a small section of the crowd stood by the practice tee and watched Nancy loosen up first her irons, then her woods; her backswing was unusually low and slow and uncommonly smooth. Her shots sailed far and true, the gallery applauded her, and it was apparent that some of the spectators had never been to a golf tournament before. It reminded me of the time, several years ago, Lee Trevino was on the practice tee hitting 7-irons high and straight, and a woman who was watching kept going "oooh" and "aaah." After a few dozen gasps, Trevino turned and said, "Look, lady, what do you expect—ground balls? I am the U.S. Open champion."

There was an electricity in Rochester, an excitement seldom felt during a competition among women golfers. The pros were, in a sense, rooting against them-



Because of her wins, Nancy became a media attraction. And she loved the attention—especially that of sportscaster Tim Melton, who became her fiancé.

selves, rooting for Nancy to win her fifth straight. "If I come to the 72nd hole needing to make a three-foot putt to tie her for first place," said Carol Mann. "I don't think I'm going to make that putt." Mann was kidding—sort of. The tall veteran of the women's tour and of the fight for acceptance of women's golf is too much of a competitor to miss a putt deliberately. But she is too much of a pragmatist not to realize how important it was to herself and to every woman on the tour that Nancy please the crowd, that Nancy set a record, that Nancy win again, that Nancy Lopez play Superwoman.

Almost two decades had passed since Arnold Palmer did to the men's tour what Nancy Lopez was doing to the women's. There had been magnificent golfers before Palmer—the Hogans and the Sneads and the Nelsons—but it was Palmer, with his dramatic televised charges to win the Masters in the late 1950s and early '60s, who gave the game charisma, who lifted it beyond sport. Arnie's Army marched through the '60s, and the men who played on the golf tour—the halfway perceptive ones—realized how valuable that Army and its leader were. "Every time I collect a check," said Frank Beard when he led the tour in money-winning in 1969, "I want to go over and thank Arnie for 25 percent of it."

Ironically, at the same time Nancy Lo-

pez and her sister LPGA pros were playing in the Bankers Trust Classic, Arnold Palmer and his fellow PGA pros were playing in the most prestigious of men's tournaments, the U.S. Open at Cherry Hills Country Club in Denver. But the capital of golf that week in June was not Denver; the spotlight was on upstate New York, on Nancy Lopez. Even the golf crowd gathered at Cherry Hills acknowledged Nancy's dominance. On the scoreboard in the press tent at the men's U.S. Open, someone had jokingly added to the list of contestants a namecard that read "Lopez, Nancy" and had posted three birdies after her name—a tribute to her skill as well as her fame.

The size of Arnie's Army had dwindled considerably by 1978. Nancy's Navy was emerging. She is a natural for the role. For one thing, she is darkly good-looking—the product of her Mexican-American heritage and her career in the sun. She has a pretty face and a sturdy build, a sexy build. Not that she is flawless. If you look at her from the back, you can see where Nancy gets her power. It was Sam Snead who once, playing a round with Dwight D. Eisenhower, was asked for a tip and responded, "Put your ass into the ball, Mr. President." If Nancy Lopez followed Snead's down-home advice, she would hit each drive 300 yards.

Her personality enhanced her looks.

She genuinely liked people. She liked her caddie, Roscoe Jones, upon whom she bestowed victory kisses with such regularity that some people suspected the relationship was more than golfer-caddie. The suspicions were wrong. Nancy did not date Roscoe; she did, however, date some of the other caddies on the tour.

She liked the crowds. She liked signing autographs. She liked posing for photographs. She did not tolerate the price of fame; she *loved* it.

She liked the reporters from newspapers and magazines and radio and television who crowded around her, who followed her to the lockerroom and to the practice tee and to her motel room and to the discotheques, who asked her about the early lessons from her father and the influence of her mother, who died during Nancy's first year on the golf tour.

Nancy could easily have grown up bitter, but instead, she grew up ebullient. As a youngster in Roswell, N.M., she had certainly encountered prejudice, especially at the local country club, but she did not let the experience destroy her. People who had once chilled her with their looks now tried to tell her that they knew right from the beginning how special she would be; Nancy recognized their hypocrisy, but she did not dwell upon it. She had better uses for her emotions.

Her emotions showed on the golf course, and that, too, was a part of her appeal. Jane Blalock said Nancy Lopez was the finest putter she had ever seen—"male or female"—and when Nancy's uncanny putting touch occasionally abandoned her, she agonized. She did not hide her disappointment at a missed putt; she did not hide her joy at a 20-footer that dropped. Nancy shared herself with her crowd.

Off the course, Nancy's emotions showed, too. She frankly conceded she liked men . . . dancing with them . . . picnicking with them . . . looking at them. Through the spring of 1978, she had what could only be called a crush on the golfer who was dominating the men's tour—Tom Watson. Nancy loved the way Tom Watson played golf, and loved the way Tom Watson looked and acted, and while she was running up her own winning streak, she kept studying the newspapers to see how Tom Watson was doing. She adored Watson only from afar. Up close, she dated men whose golf games were not nearly as good as her own. (She stopped dating her former fiancé; she had never quite forgiven him for going behind her back and dating one of her teammates on the Tulsa University women's golf team.)

By all the laws of logic and reason, Nancy Lopez should not have won the Classic in Rochester. The pressure was simply too great—the pressure of history, of the media, of the crowds, of her rivals. On the back nine of her opening round, Nancy hit an errant shot that struck the

head of a spectator named Jerry Masalella, a local dentist. He went down as if axed. Nancy rushed to his side. He was not seriously injured, but Nancy did not know that, and she cried and she worried and she played the back nine in a teary daze, spraying shots all over the Locust Hill course. She still managed to finish with a 72, one stroke under par and only one stroke behind the first-round leader. On the second day, Lopez slipped to a 73, and when Jane Blalock shot a 68 in the third round, the pigtailed veteran moved three strokes ahead of the rookie from New Mexico. A little-known pro named Alex Reinhardt was in second place, one stroke ahead of Nancy, and Pam Higgins, Sandra Post and Judy Rankin were all tied with Nancy.

She had no right to win on Sunday. And of course, she won. She shot a 32 on the front nine, whizzed past Blalock and clinched the championship when she curled in a 25-foot putt for a birdie on the 17th hole. As the ball dove into the hole, Nancy leaped in the air—and so did women's golf. The game's new stature

"I want to be a champion over a long period. I don't want to be a Johnny Miller"

was set; Nancy had a record string of victories and, even more impressive, she had raised her earnings during her first 12 months as a professional to \$153,336—more than *any* golfer had ever won in a rookie professional year. To outearn the men—whose pot of prize money each week was roughly three times as great as the women's—was a stunning achievement.

Nancy was on top of the world. She floated into Hershey, Pa., for the Lady Keystone Open, and she talked of winning seven, eight, nine maybe ten tournaments in a row. She talked of trying to win 14 tournaments during the year, which would be a new LPGA record. Everyone knew that Nancy's earnings for 1978 would sail over the \$200,000 mark, a barrier which had never been approached by a woman golfer.

But Nancy did not win in Hershey. She did not win in the whole month of July. She did not win again until August in England, when she captured the Colgate European Open. As the end of the 1978 LPGA tour approached, it became clear that Nancy Lopez was not going to reach \$200,000 in earnings. She had, after her record streak, fallen into a terrible slump.

It was, to be sure, a terrible slump only by the exacting standards of a Nancy Lo-

pez. Not once all year did she fail to place among the top 25 in any tournament she finished (and only injuries—she never missed a cut—caused her not to finish a golf tournament).

Still, it was the superstar version of a slump, the same sort of slump suffered by another athlete who dominated the first half of 1978—Steve Cauthen who, after winning the Triple Crown in his first appearance in each of those races, suffered a terrible spill at Saratoga, narrowly escaped death and, understandably, did not win a lot of races during his recovery. Other jockeys would love to have Cauthen's slumps as their hot streaks and other golfers would like to cash the checks Nancy Lopez cashes during her bad weeks.

And yet the danger that her star could burn out is a real one, a danger that Nancy Lopez recognizes and battles. "I don't want to be a one-year sensation," Nancy said after her winning streak came to an end. "I want to prove that I can be a champion over a long period, over many years. I want to be the best woman golfer ever—and I can't be that in one year."

Nancy shook her head. "I don't want to be Johnny Miller," she said.

Johnny Miller was once the male Nancy Lopez. He was the blond Nancy Lopez. He was the all-American Nancy Lopez. He was pretty and skilled, and he didn't have a sin in his body, and with his beautiful wife and his beautiful family and his Mexican-American caddie, he was going to take over the men's golf tour. He was going to wipe out Nicklaus and Palmer and Watson and Trevino. He was going to own all the records. He was the best golfer in the world—for one year. And then he faded. Not to obscurity. Not to the brink of starvation. But from the top, to the level below the top.

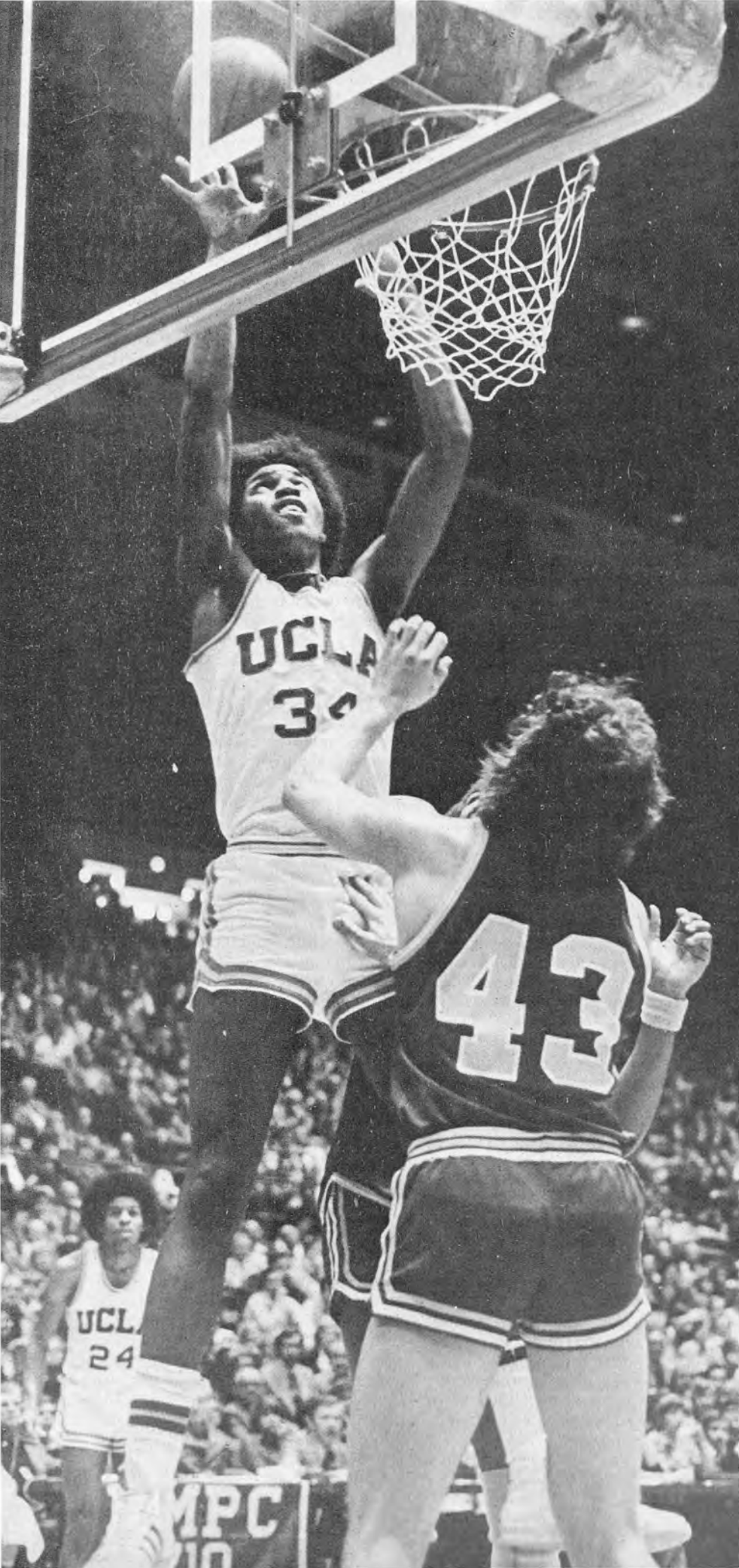
Nancy Lopez knew how quickly golf could humble its stars. The turning point could be something psychological—a loss of drive, a loss of concentration. It could be something physical—a pain in the back that spreads into the shoulders and into the arms and into the legs.

"I want to be around a long time," she said. "I truly want to be."

The odds are she will be a frequent winner again in 1979. The surprise is not that Nancy Lopez slumped in 1978 but that she didn't slump sooner. The burden upon her was the heaviest upon any woman golfer in history. She certainly had more than earned a collapse.

It is ironic that her slump began in Hershey because it was in Hershey that Nancy met the man she is planning to marry this winter. His name is Tim Melton. He is a tall, muscular young man, who is personable and good-looking. There is only one thing wrong with him: his occupation. Nancy Lopez is planning to marry a sportscaster.

I thought she had better taste. ■



In the neatly kept two-bedroom Los Angeles apartment that David Greenwood shares with his close friend and UCLA teammate Roy Hamilton, the walls are lined with posters bearing pictures of Elton John and Jimi Hendrix and cries for social justice for blacks. But the most eye-catching feature of the apartment is the seven-foot high, eight-component stereo unit that David Greenwood designed. Even more impressive is the fact that David and his father built the unit.

It is 8:15 this summer morning, and Hamilton has already left for work. In 20 minutes Greenwood must leave for his own job. He hurries into the kitchen and prepares his breakfast in a blender: pineapple, honey, eggs and vitamins. "This gets me going in the morning," he says. Five long gulps of the liquid and he moves into his bedroom, where speakers hang from the ceiling and tropical fish swim in a large tank. He takes off the blue caftan he is wearing and lays it on the king-size bed which can barely accommodate his six feet, nine inches and 238 pounds. Greenwood slips into a pair of UCLA warmup basketball pants, white sneakers and a yellow T-shirt. "See this here?" he asks, holding up a blue jumpsuit with white piping on both sides. "I designed it."

Although moving quickly as he readies for work, he maintains his composure and answers the questions I throw at him. He speaks in a slightly nasal voice, with an occasional stutter. "He used to stutter much more than he does now," says Father Fisher Robinson, principal of Verbena Dei, where Greenwood attended high school and was one of the most heavily recruited basketball players in the country. "But as he acquired self-confidence, it lessened."

"The rumor," I tell Greenwood as he

Though Greenwood is the clutch scorer and rebounder for UCLA, he has subdued his "star" role in coach Gary Cunningham's team-oriented offense.

A young star with perspective

The six-foot, nine-inch All-America forward realizes that he is the key if UCLA is to regain the top.

Yet David Greenwood can still say basketball "is not life and death"

By STU BLACK

goes back to the living room. "is that you and Roy were well taken care of, paid, to come to UCLA."

He laughs. "No, no. A lot of people thought that's what happened. All the school has gotten us is summer jobs. Everything Roy and I have we paid for. I wish people would have offered to buy me things. If they did, I wouldn't have a couch like that," he says, pointing to an armless piece of furniture that even the Salvation Army would put out on the street. "As for my Volvo, if anybody in America would like to see my payment slips, and then take over the remaining payments, that would be fine with me."

It is the view of George McQuarn, who coached Greenwood and Hamilton as high-school sophomores, that "David and Roy have always had their own dreams and goals. They grew up in Los Angeles, sat in front of the tube as kids and watched UCLA winning NCAA championships every year. David and Roy went to UCLA for a very simple reason: They both always had their hearts set on going there."

Indeed, for the past 14 years UCLA has been to college basketball what Notre Dame is to college football, the Yankees to baseball, Muhammad Ali to boxing and Steve Martin to wild and crazy guys—the pinnacle, the ultimate. Superstars such as Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Bill Walton and Marques Johnson have put UCLA on top. This season Greenwood is their successor, the All-America forward expected to bring UCLA back to the top. He is honored but not overwhelmed by the acclaim. David Greenwood is a young man with perspective, a young man who designs recording equipment and clothes, a young man who says that basketball "is very important, but it is not life and death."

"One time last season," he says, shaking his head in wonder, "we were playing a game up in Oregon, at McArthur Court in Eugene, and I'm on the foul line. Under the basket I see this girl shouting at me, her face twisted. She's yelling, 'I hate you,

you mother [censored].' I said to myself, 'Wow, and she isn't even playing.'"

Greenwood passes on that story in hopes of convincing people to sort out their priorities regarding sports and life. It is something he has been able to do for quite some time.

David Greenwood grew up in the city of Compton, a small, mostly black enclave just outside of Los Angeles. The third of five children and the first boy, he was a tall, thin, delicate-looking child. In a home where the family ate dinner together, had fun together and talked about problems together, he learned at a very young age that there was a purpose to life and it was his job to find his. By the time he was ten he was an accomplished pianist who also played the cello and violin. "My mother had me practice the piano every day until I was about 13. Then she asked me what I wanted to concentrate on. I said basketball."

Six-feet-one when he was in the seventh grade, Greenwood sprang to 6-7 by the time he graduated from junior high school. He wasn't merely tall, he was quick, agile, with a good shooting touch and a fearless rebounding style. When a man named Reggie Wright picked an all-star team from Los Angeles-area junior high school players and entered the team in a series of tournaments, Greenwood was his center.

One of the guards was Roy Hamilton, and he and Greenwood became fast friends. In the fall they enrolled at Verbum Dei, a Catholic high school that puts heavy emphasis on academics. "I didn't want him to go to public school," Greenwood's mother recalled. "We wanted David to be a doctor, not an athlete."

Not only would Greenwood get a better education at Verbum Dei, she reasoned, but he would avoid the youth-gang warfare afflicting the public schools in southern Los Angeles and Compton during the

David, who wants to get into record engineering, designed and built his own stereo unit.



David Greenwood

early '70s. Murders and beatings were not unusual. "One day when I was in junior high school I went to the boys' bathroom," David Greenwood tells me as we leave his apartment. "and I stopped to watch kids shooting craps in front of the urinals. There were about ten guys watching and they were shooting for nickels. After one throw, the guy who lost didn't have enough money to pay the guy who won. The guy who won pulled out a gun and shot him dead. We were all shocked. I decided then I wanted to get out of there."

At Verbum Dei the relationship between Greenwood and Hamilton tightened. "Roy is part of the family," Greenwood says while driving to work. "He doesn't knock on the door when he comes over to the house, he just walks in. He goes places with my father and brothers that I don't. He always has dinner with us. Roy is one of my brothers. If my father gives me a \$20 bill, he'll give Roy \$20 too."

"It's scary being around Greenwood and Hamilton sometimes," says Cincinnati *Enquirer* columnist Mark Purdy, who covered UCLA last season when he was with the *Los Angeles Times*. "It seems like they have ESP. All of a sudden, without words being spoken between them, they're off and doing something together."

By their senior years, Hamilton and Greenwood were the most publicized high-school players in the Los Angeles area. That season, Verbum Dei extended its winning streak to 39 successive victories.

Having determined to attend college together, Greenwood and Hamilton narrowed their choices to Nevada-Las Vegas, Notre Dame and UCLA. Accustomed to the warm climate of southern California, they were concerned about the harsher weather at Notre Dame. But Notre Dame basketball coach Digger Phelps assured the boys "not to worry about the weather," Hamilton recalled. "it's no factor. So, David and I go to Chicago and two Notre Dame alumni take us to dinner. Afterward, they put us on a twin-engine plane to South Bend. We get on the plane and it's pouring, lightning is all around us. The turbulence on the plane is unbelievable. A tornado watch is out. Dave and I look at each other and we're both scared to death. There was no way either of us was going to Notre Dame after that ride."

They signed on at UCLA, with Greenwood eventually causing some controversy by saying he might not have gone there if John Wooden had not retired as coach. Greenwood didn't like Wooden's reluctance to play freshmen. "I had never sat on the bench in my life and I didn't intend to," Greenwood tells me as he en-

ters Pauley Pavilion to begin his day's work. "I didn't mind if I was given a shot at playing and then was beaten out. That was fair. I just didn't want to be sat down simply because I was a freshman. I had a lot of confidence in my ability to play. Later, I apologized to Wooden for making the statement because it came out sounding different than I meant."

Pauley Pavilion is filled with the sharp, excited screeches of girls ten to 12 years of age. Directing them, and screeching almost as much, is 21-year-old David Greenwood. In the employ of the National Youth Sports Program, he is teaching basketball to girls from poor areas. Moving constantly, one moment he is picking up a little girl who can't throw a ball high enough to touch the basket, the next moment devising games so the youngsters won't get bored. Clearly he is enjoying himself. Later in the summer he will work for free, conducting basketball clinics for kids in Compton, and will regard the experience as one of the high points of his life. "David is not the sum total of his minutes on the basketball court," says Terry Scott, a director of the National Youth Sports Program. "He is a multifaceted person."

At noon, Greenwood is finished with work. He takes two aspirin because the kids' shouting has given him a headache. Walking across the campus to attend one of the four history courses he is taking in summer school, he is stopped every few feet by admirers. He enjoys the attention. "I was excited about coming to UCLA," Greenwood says. "I had never had the chance to deal with anyone but black people. I was anxious to meet whites. Since I've been at UCLA I've also met Arabs, Hawaiians, Japanese, everyone. It's been tremendous."

We stop for lunch, and Greenwood—perhaps because of the headache—eats lightly. Usually a meal with him is an experience. I remember Father Thomas James of Verbum Dei telling me: "The last time I ate with David he had nine tacos. It reminded me of the time I took him and Roy out to a nice restaurant in their senior year at Verbum Dei. We went to a place that advertised all you could eat for \$3.50. David must have eaten 350 dinners that night. A few weeks later the three of us happened to be driving by that restaurant and it was closed, out of business. 'You see what happens, Father,' Roy said. 'You take a brother to a nice place and he closes it down.'"

Following lunch, we go to Greenwood's classroom, which is thick with people, some 50 in a room designed for 35. History is his major. "I have a lot of work to do in this course," he says. "I have three long books to read before the midterm next week," he says matter-of-factly. He has a track record of completing what he must. He is in summer school because both he



David and Bruin guard Roy Hamilton (right) are roommates and were friends before playing together in high school.

and Hamilton have committed themselves to graduating on time. "I'm majoring in history because they don't have what I really want here," he says. "I want to go into producing and engineering records. I like to make sounds. That's the main reason I have that system my father and I built in my house."

Under coach Gene Bartow, Greenwood averaged 4.9 points and 3.7 rebounds per game as a freshman and 16.7 points and 9.7 rebounds as a sophomore. Last season, as a junior, Greenwood's statistics improved under a new coach, Gary Cunningham, and he became a first-team All-America, but he regards it as a difficult year. Bartow had employed the star system and the inside power game, Greenwood's forte. But Cunningham stressed more movement and teamwork. "When I was a freshman," Greenwood says, "Richard Washington was the big star, so we had to try to get the ball to him first. In my sophomore year, Marques Johnson was the star and we had to try to get the ball to Marques first. If Marques wasn't in position to shoot, I was the second man to get the ball."

I had some big nights as a soph, scoring 34, 32, 31, and 26 twice that year. I had all my big-point games as a sophomore. Bartow felt the best percentage shot was from 14 feet and in, and Marques and I were the best shooters from that range. With Marques gone, it was going to be my chance to star, but with the arrival of Cunningham they were taking my star away. I thought my average might drop, which it did. I went from about 17 points a game to 17.5. That is actually a drop because I expected to score more than 20 a game. Sometimes Bartow's system was bad for the other four guys because they had to stand around and watch one guy work. But if you were the one guy, it was great."

Greenwood retooled his game to match the expectations of the new coach. He became a full partner in a team-oriented offense, though he was clearly the dominant player. On the days the team played well, played smart, Greenwood was the critical player in the attack. When the Bruins needed an important point or tough rebound, he was the man. When they needed a blocked shot or a good outlet pass, he was the man. If they needed to be carried for awhile, he did it. The bigger the game, the better he played.

He was not able to maintain that intensity consistently, though, sometimes failing to pump himself up for lesser games, a flaw stretching back to his early days at Verbum Dei. Says George McQuarn, the Nevada-Las Vegas assistant coach, who coached Greenwood as a Verbum Dei sophomore: "To a large degree he's overcome that lack of commitment and intensity, though he still may have a hard time getting himself mentally ready for a game against Santa Barbara. It's no trick to be ready for Notre Dame or Michigan. If he's ready, if the adrenaline is flowing, he's devastating. He can go to the boards, score points, play the shutdown D, and just lead the ballclub at both ends of the floor."

With Greenwood as the key player, UCLA had a 25-3 record last season. But the team was eliminated fairly early in the NCAA tournament, the victim of difficulties in the backcourt. According to columnist Mark Purdy, Hamilton and Raymond Townsend—the starting guards—were "pretty close a couple of years ago, but then they got to be competitors for a job. They're both really tough competitors and once they got into competition on the court it spread over into the personal. They didn't get into regular physical confrontations, but they hardly ever talked to each other. And at times early last season, it really showed up on the court. Sometimes they wouldn't even pass to each other. Cunningham got them together with the rest of the team and said something along the lines that we can't expect everyone to get along, but on the court let's play together. He had these meetings more than once. Naturally Da-

vid, being Roy's friend, saw Roy's side."

Someone close to the team who insists on anonymity says: "Bartow was the type of coach who would stop play and say, 'You're taking 25-foot shots and you have All-America Marques Johnson underneath. You have David Greenwood underneath. You either get them the ball or you sit next to me.' Townsend wanted to play, so he passed the ball. Last season he would take wild shots and I would shake my head. I just couldn't believe that he was being allowed to take those shots. But no one said anything so he kept doing it. That's why he wound up one for 11 in the Arkansas game. [The NCAA Western Regionals game which UCLA lost.] Two years ago Townsend would have been on the bench after the first few shots. Yeah, we had some problems with guys looking out for themselves first. It hurt us down the stretch, especially when guys didn't get the ball to David."

"We did have personality differences last season," Larry Farmer, the UCLA assistant coach, admitted in the fall of 1978. "But we've had them on every team

"If David is ready, if the adrenaline is flowing, he's devastating"

I've ever played on." Farmer, who played on three UCLA national championship squads, went on. "We look at ourselves as a family, so all of our internal problems are handled inside the family." And David Greenwood, everybody seems to agree, is a key man in keeping that family together—off the court as well as on.

"I've had my problems at UCLA," says senior guard Brad Holland. "I've had my ups and downs over my first three years here. David has been great, a good friend. He's sat down with me more than once and helped me keep a positive attitude. It's important coming from a guy who's always playing. It's nice that he even cared that I was struggling. He made the approaches to me when I was down. He'd sit down and talk to me at training table or before practice. David Greenwood is a caring person."

It is late afternoon and Greenwood has finished his day at summer school. Before going home he heads to the training room for treatment of an ankle he sprained in a pickup basketball game. With his ankle deep in ice, Greenwood jokes with the UCLA trainer about the possibilities of developing an injection that could get a player in shape without working out.

"David is a jokester if he knows you,"

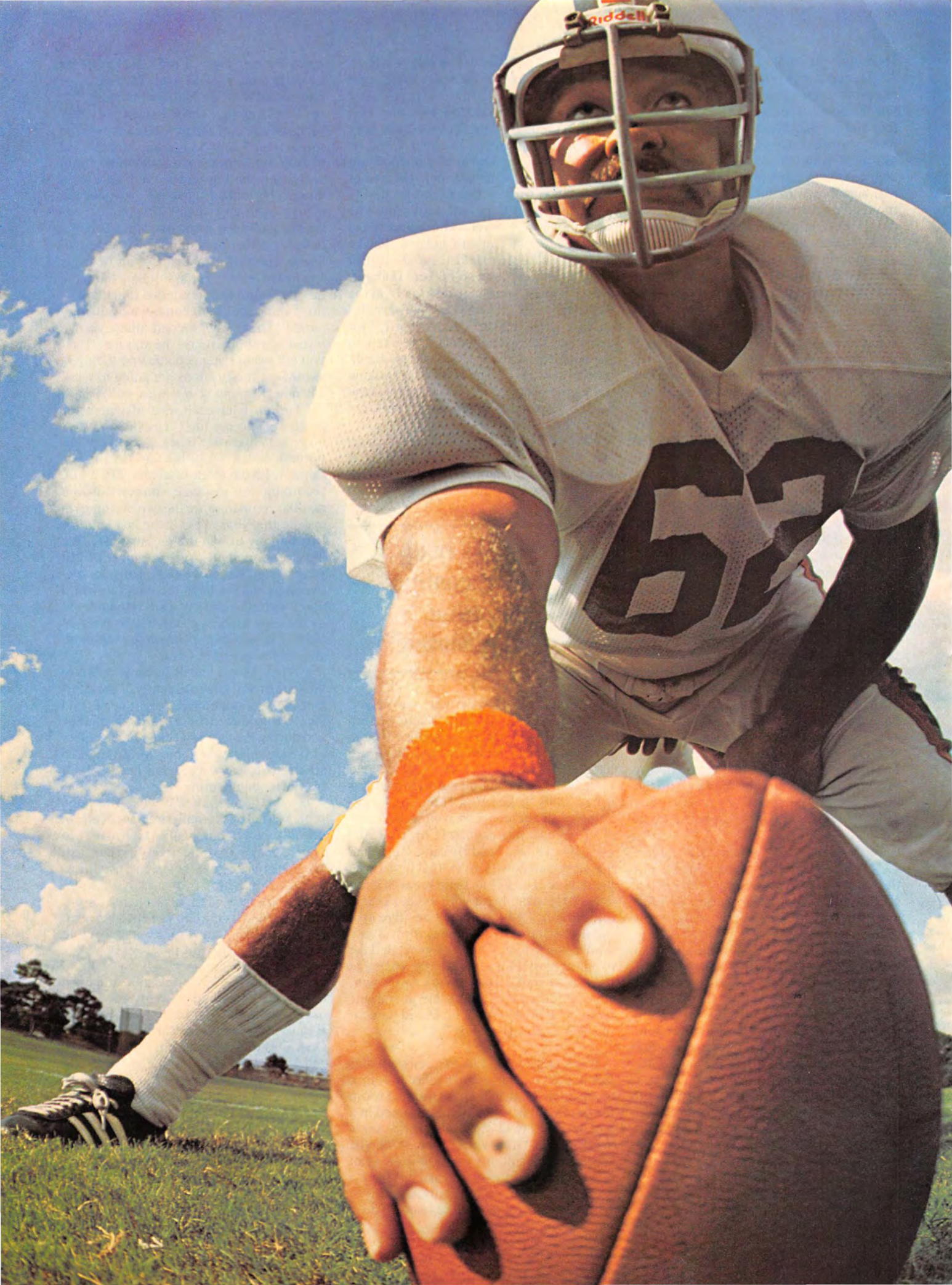
Larry Farmer says. "I'm 27. He teases me by calling me the old man. Last year we played the Russian National team on Super Bowl Sunday. The Russians had a play set up where they throw a lob pass over the top to their 7-foot-5 big man. I told David to help out from the weakside if he could and when the big guy moved, to take a charge. He looked at me like, 'you take the charge—this guy weighs 275 pounds.' After the game we went over to a friend's house together to watch the Super Bowl. David knows I'm a Bronco fan because I'm from Denver. He's watching the game quietly—until Dallas got two touchdowns up. Then he couldn't contain himself anymore. 'That's the second thing you've been right about today,' he tells me. 'First you tell me to take a charge and then you assure me the Broncos are going to win.' Then he just shook his head sadly."

"I think I have an idea of where the game fits into my life," Greenwood says now, with his ankle in ice. "It is very important, but it is not life and death. The thing is, I have other interests. My music recording for instance. Basketball and graduating on time are the two big things in my life this year. This is the last shot for Roy and me to win the national title. We have a good shot. We have most of last year's team back, we have harmony between us and we have the talent to win. I don't want the class of 1979 remembered as the only UCLA group that wasn't involved in winning a national championship in the post-1964 era."

"When David and Roy came down to visit me in San Diego recently," their former high-school coach, John Sneed, told me, "I introduced them to friends of mine and during the entire weekend the subject of basketball never came up. Roy talked about his acting career and David about his music engineering."

Nevertheless, they are interested in professional basketball careers too, and in Sneed's view, "both will go high in the pro draft. Speaking as objectively as I can, as a professional evaluator of talent, David has to be one of the top forwards in the country. He's got the great inside game for pro ball. He handles the ball well for a big man. He's got quick feet. Pro scouts have told me he'll go in the top five."

Greenwood agrees. "I believe I will end up in the top five," he tells me. And even though the beginning of his pro career will likely signal the end of his years as Roy Hamilton's teammate, "all good things," says David Greenwood, "do have to end." Looking ahead to the pro draft, he says, "Everybody in the top five will do pretty well contract-wise. That's what being a pro is all about, the contract. Except for last year, I've always enjoyed basketball. It's always been fun and I'm going to make sure it keeps being fun. When I turn pro," says David Greenwood, the pragmatist, "it will only be better because I'll be getting paid for having fun." ■



IT ALL STARTS WITH THE CENTER

The men who anchor the offensive line toil in obscurity, which is why SPORT asked ten centers to pick the best in the NFL. The landslide winner was Dolphin Jim Langer—who just may be the finest in history

By DAVE ANDERSON

One play has ended and the next is forming. Eight yards behind the line of scrimmage, Jim Langer is calling, "Huddle up, huddle up." Some centers raise an arm to signal where the huddle is, but he never does. "Let's go," he says in his firm Minnesota farmland voice. "Huddle up." As the Miami Dolphins' offensive unit congregates around him, the 6-foot-2, 250-pound center—aware that the ball is now inside their opponents' 20-yard line—stares at the running backs. "Remember," he tells them, "this team likes to blitz down here. Pick up the blitz."

With the 30-second clock flashing down, the quarterback moves quickly into the huddle to call the play and snap signal.

When the Dolphins break their huddle, Jim Langer hurries to the line of scrimmage, the snap count embedded in his mind. Peering through his facemask at the defensive alignment, he crouches over the ball, its laces up. His left arm poised and clenched to deliver a block, he grips the front nose of the ball with his right hand, tipping it up slightly. But he is not looking at the ball. He is not even looking at the helmet-shaded eyes of the nose tackle whose facemask is only inches away from his, or at the narrowed eyes of the middle linebacker lurking beyond. Instead, he is looking down at their hands and feet, hoping to detect which way they are leaning.

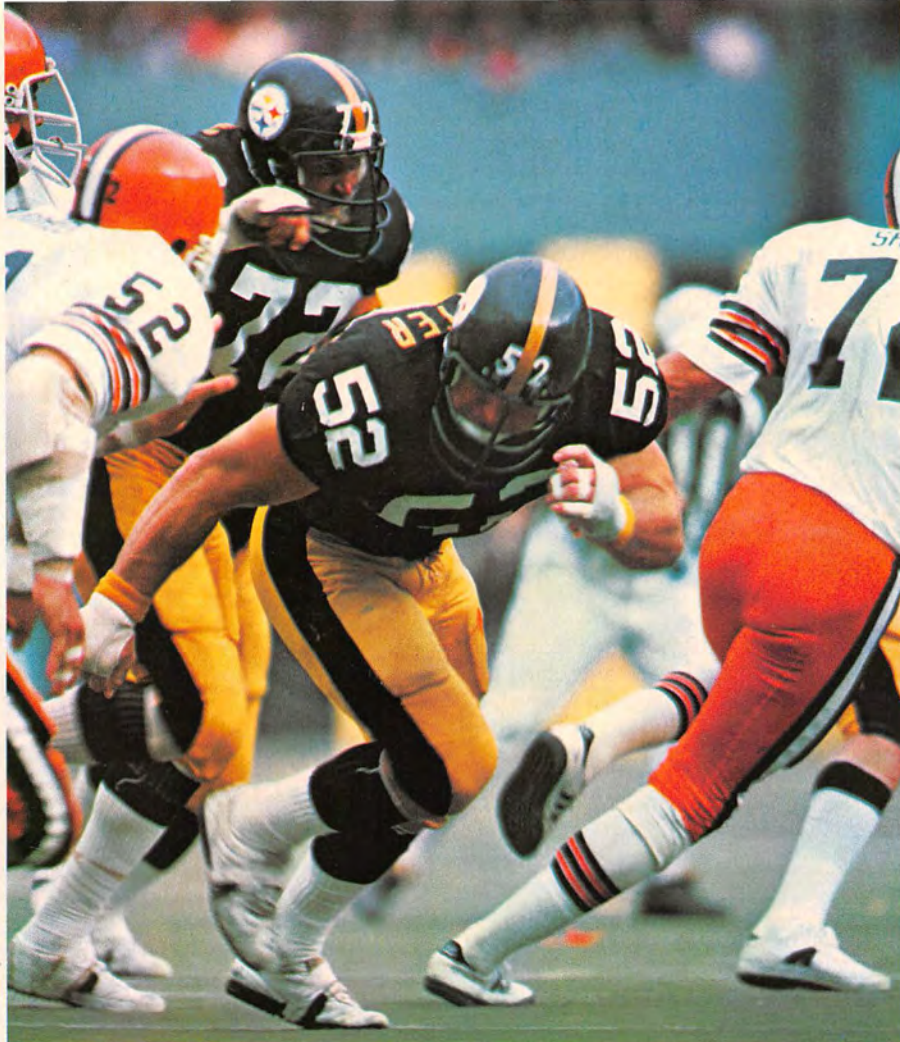
Depending on the movements of the defense, he might call out changes in the blocking assignments for himself and/or the other offensive linemen. With a quick code word, such as "odd" or "even" or "Kuech," he might block a tackle in a 4-3 defense while Dolphin guard Bob Kuechenberg blocks the middle linebacker. He might ignore the nose tackle in a 3-4 defense and block one of the inside linebackers. While Langer is making these blocking adjustments, defensive players

"He makes things look easy," Cowboy center John Fitzgerald says of Langer, No. 62, who is pass blocking (right) against the Cardinals.

◀ PHOTO BY JOE DIMAGGIO

PHOTOS BY CARL SKALAK, JR./OPTICOM ▽

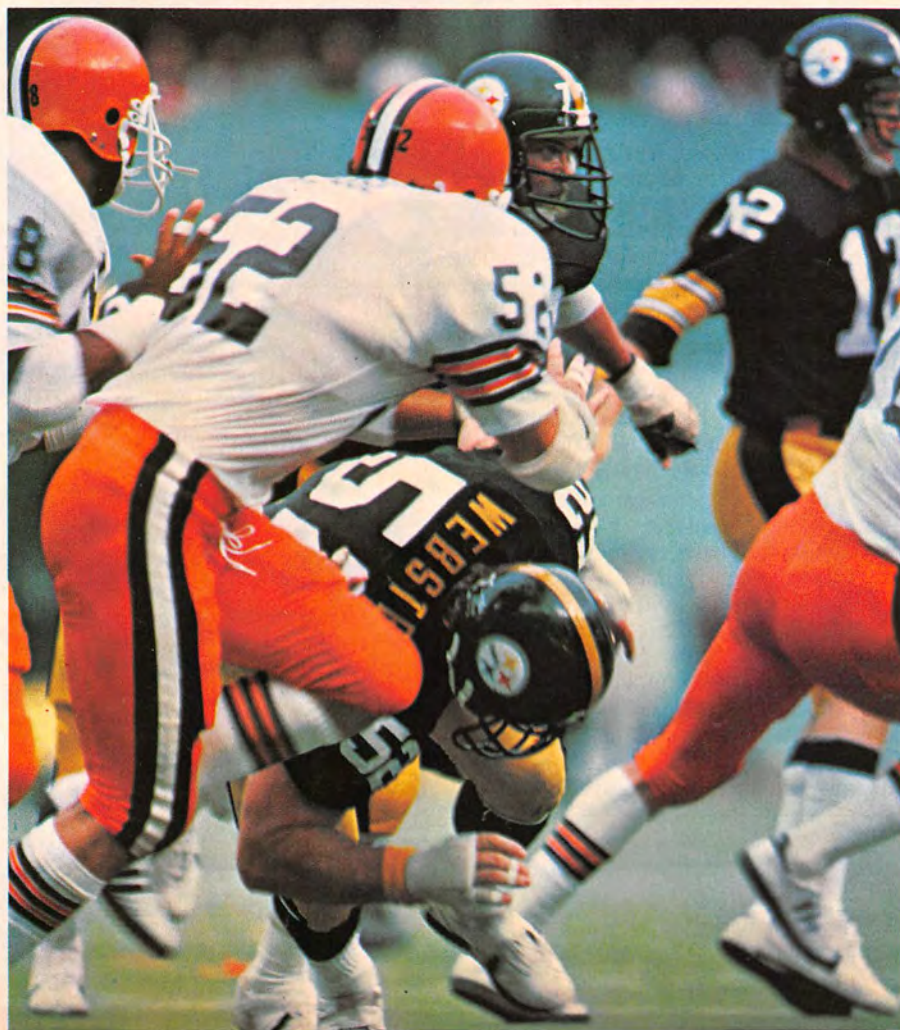




▽ PHOTO BY TONY TOMSIC



The Steelers' muscular Mike Webster (No. 52) here fires out to cut off Brown middle linebacker Dick Ambrose on a power sweep to the left. Says the Browns' veteran defensive tackle Earl Edwards: "Webster is explosive. He's the strongest center in the league."



CENTERS

are yelling to confuse or intimidate the Dolphin offense. Langer's defensive man might be snarling, "I'm going to kill you this time, Langer."

He seldom hears this talk. He is listening only for the quarterback's voice above the muffled din of the stadium.

Now, above Langer's rump, the quarterback is barking signals. At the snap, the center thrusts his right hand back, turning the ball precisely so that the laces slap across the quarterback's passing hand like the crack of a gunshot. In the same motion, Langer drives into his block. *The same motion*, he has reminded himself. *You can't snap and then block. It's got to be the same motion.* On a pass play, he tries to jam his fists under the armpits of the nose tackle or the blitzing linebacker. On a running play, he explodes into the nose tackle with upper-body strength that has benchpressed 470 pounds, or he fires out into the middle linebacker.

All around Langer, players are grunting and snorting amidst the clack of shoulder pads. And beyond, the stadium erupts in a roar. But, struggling to protect the passer or buried under a pileup, he does not hear the noise as the quarterback drills a sideline pass to a wide receiver or a running back slices up the middle. And Langer cannot see the play as the spectators do.

"I never see somebody make a great catch or a great cut—not if I'm doing my job," he says. "I should be looking away from the receiver or the runner. I really have to wait until Tuesday to see the films of what happened in the game."

Jim Langer does his job. Does it better than any other National Football League center now, perhaps better than any other center in history.

Except for kickoffs, every play in football starts with the center who, aside from the quarterback, is the most crucial offensive player. He calls the blocking assignments for the offensive line, and if he misses his own block, the quarterback is in instant jeopardy. Without a quality center, a team can't run up the middle or protect its passer—which means a team can't make the playoffs—yet the center is pro football's most invisible player.

"Someone," jokes Dave Manders, now retired after a decade as the Dallas Cowboys' center, "once asked my wife who plays center for the Cowboys and she came home and asked me."

It is the centers who—more than anyone else—know each other, study each other, appreciate each other.

To determine the best centers, SPORT asked ten leading NFL centers to appraise each other. Each voted for the three best centers in 1-2-3 order, but none was permitted to vote for himself. And each was assured that his personal ballot would be kept secret. Those polled in the AFC were Langer, Jack Rudnay (Kansas City), Mike Webster (Pittsburgh), Dave Dalby (Oakland) and Bill Lenkaitis (New England). The voters in the NFC were Tom Banks (St. Louis), Rich Saul (Los Angeles), Jeff Van Note (Atlanta), Mick Tinglehoff (Minnesota) and John Fitzgerald (Dallas).

The poll clearly established 30-year-old Jim Langer as *the* best center. By a landslide.

In most cases, a polled center would quickly name Langer, then pause while pondering his other choices. The Dolphin was rated first by eight of the centers and second by the ninth (remember, Langer couldn't vote for himself). Only two other centers were accorded a first-place vote: Banks and Webster, one each. Banks was mentioned on four ballots, as were Rudnay, Saul and Dalby, and Webster on three. Two named on one ballot each were Tom DeLeone of the Cleveland Browns and Van Note.

Langer's top rating was not a surprise. He is expected to be the consensus All-Pro center for the fifth consecutive season. But the margin of his victory was startling. Perhaps no other NFL player would so dominate a poll of his peers.

"I'm flattered," Langer said when told of the voting. "It really means something when your peers vote for you. But as for me being the best center, I don't know about that. The word 'best' doesn't exist in my vocabulary. There are too many variables to be called the 'best' center."

Maybe so, but the word "best" exists when his peers talk about him: "He combines the best of strength and speed," Banks says. "I like to see a center who tries to drive a guy out of there," says Lenkaitis, "and Langer's the best at that." Fitzgerald says, "He makes things

look easy. He's the best."

And there is no hesitation in using the word "best" by those who must cope with Langer. "Jim is the best," says Bill Bergey, the Philadelphia Eagles' middle linebacker. "He can make his snap, roll forward and block the middle linebacker. I know. He's blocked me before I can move. And he hits. He once blocked me in the ribs so hard I couldn't get a deep breath for three plays."

"Jim is my biggest challenge," says Ray (Sugar Bear) Hamilton, the New England Patriots' 245-pound nose tackle who lines up opposite Langer twice each season. "The only way I can make All-Pro is to do well against him, because he's the best. But it's not easy. He's a one-handed snapper. And he's so quick."

So strong, too. With the popularity of the 3-4 defense now, a center must be strong enough to handle the middle man of the defensive line, a nose tackle who might weigh as much as 270 pounds. "Jim's got the strength to do that," says Don Shula, the Dolphins' coach. "Some of the smaller centers have been driven out of the league by the 3-4 defense with that big nose tackle. But he handles that nose tackle like a guard would." Langer, significantly, was a guard when the Dolphins claimed him on waivers from the Browns, who had signed him out of South Dakota State as a free agent in 1970. But the Browns had not pursued him; nor had he pursued them. A lefthanded pitcher and first baseman in college, Langer had his tryout arranged not by his football coach but by his baseball coach, Erv Huether.

"Huether knew Bob Nussbaumer, one of the Browns' assistant coaches," Langer recalls. "He set it up for me. As late as the night before I left for training camp, I had my doubts as to whether I should bother going, but I went anyway."

Although he had been a college linebacker, the Browns tried him at guard. The offensive line coach, Fritz Heisler, also suggested that he work at center. "The more you can do," Heisler said, "the better chance you have of making the team." Early in the week of the final exhibition game, Blanton Collier, then the Browns' coach, told Langer he would be kept on their taxi squad that season. But first he had to be put on waivers to comply with a roster-cut deadline.

"I phoned my wife at home in Royalton



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CENTERS

[Minn.] and told her to come to Cleveland," he says. "The next thing I knew, the Dolphins claimed me, but I didn't think they'd keep me very long."

With the Dolphins he continued to work at both guard and center. But in the closing minutes of a 24-0 loss to the Vikings in the final 1971 preseason game, he impressed Shula—with a tackle rather than a block. One of the Vikings was returning an interception along the sideline in front of the Dolphin bench when Langer leveled him. "He really put a shot on that guy," Shula recalls. "I knew then I wanted him in there more than he'd been."

When the 1972 season began, Langer was the Dolphin center. That year the Dolphins went 17-0 and won their first of two consecutive Super Bowl games. The next season he was voted by the AFC coaches as the Pro Bowl starter and in 1974 he emerged as the consensus All-Pro center. But even now he remains in relative obscurity.

"The obscurity," he says, "hasn't been a problem for me, maybe because I'm from a small school and never was drafted. I never expected much."

After a Dolphin practice, SPORT photographer Joe DiMaggio was shooting Langer for this story when several teammates teased their center about his sudden fame. "Hey, look," one shouted, "Jim finally made the bubble-gum cards."

Don Shula also watched the photo session. "It's about time," the coach said proudly, "you got some recognition."

But by nature, centers don't demand recognition. Instead, they seem content with a low profile. Jack Rudnay seems to acknowledge that when he says, "I'm comfortable in my little world." And listen to Mike Webster: "I enjoy my privacy"; Rich Saul: "I don't need recognition"; and Tom Banks: "I've been a center since the eighth grade. I don't know any different."

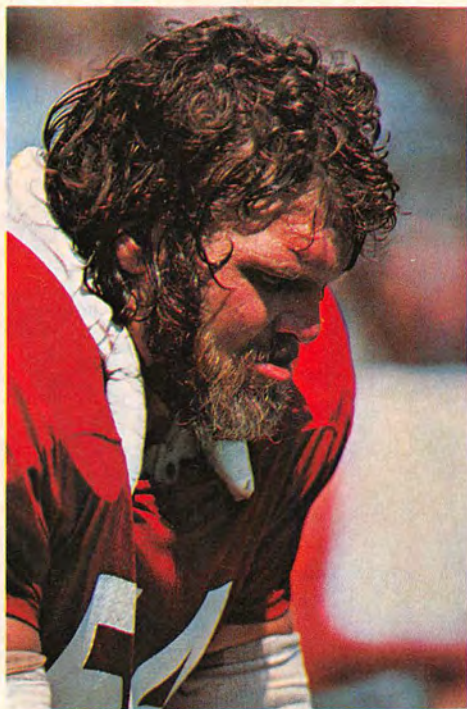
John Fitzgerald is unique among centers in that he snaps "blind" to quarterback Roger Staubach, who stands five yards behind the line of scrimmage in the Cowboys' shotgun formation. About two months before the Cowboys went to their 1975 training camp, Tom Landry informed Fitzgerald that the shotgun, or "the spread" as the coach calls it, would be inserted into the offense.

"Learn the snap," Landry said.

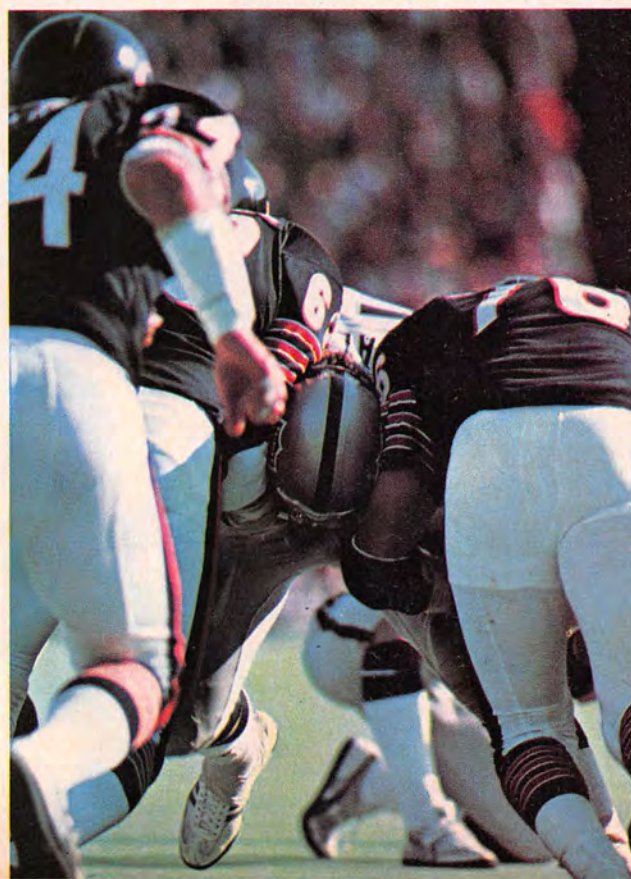
"I can look, can't I?" asked Fitzgerald, thinking he could peek back between his legs as centers do on snapping for punts and placekicks. "It's all right if I look?"

"No," said Landry, "there'll be a man for you to block. You have to look at him. Snap without looking."

Practicing as many as 100 snaps a day at training camp, Fitzgerald learned. He de-



Cardinal center Tom Banks (above) is "very strong, a good drive blocker and very quick getting to the linebacker," according to Eagle middle guard Charlie Johnson. Falcon Jeff Van Note, blocking Steeler Joe Greene (No. 75, above right), "finesses you instead of overpowering you," Greene says. Tackle Jim Osborne, one of several Bears trying to get past Oakland's Dave Dalby (below right) says, "A nose tackle usually has to be double-teamed, but Dalby is so quick he needs less help."



PHOTOS BY TONY TOMSIC



◁ PHOTO BY CARL SKALAK, JR./OPTICOM PHOTO BY RICH PILLING ▽



The Chiefs' Jack Rudnay in a typical "huddle-up" stance (above) "will slip by you on running plays and block a line-backer," says Bronco nose tackle Rubin Carter. Three other outstanding centers on running plays: The Steelers' Webster (52) going after a backer (top left); the Browns' Tom DeLeone (54) on a sweep (top right); and the Rams' Rich Saul missing 49er tackle Jimmy Webb.

△ PHOTO BY CARL SKALAK, JR./OPTICOM
◁ PHOTO BY BOB PETERSON

CENTERS

veloped a groove that puts the ball in the quarterback's hands almost flawlessly. But occasionally one or the other goofs. Early this season a Fitzgerald snap sailed through Staubach's hands. "That one," Staubach scolded Fitzgerald in the next huddle, "was a little fast."

"Keep your eye on it, Roger," replied Fitzgerald. "You get paid enough for that."

Fitzgerald considers his Irish heritage ideal for a center. "The Irish," he says, "love the earth." Dave Dalby, however, doesn't relish being earthbound, saying, "I don't want to be on the ground. I'd rather be standing over the guy." Today Dalby must perform in Jim Langer's shadow, but occasionally a center will develop an All-Pro reputation quickly, as Langer has and Mick Tinglehoff did.

Now in his 17th season, the Vikings' 38-year-old offensive captain emerged as the All-NFL center in 1964, only his third season, thanks to the impact of a Vince Lombardi quote. "After a big game in Green Bay that year," Tinglehoff recalls, "Lombardi complimented me on the way I handled Ray Nitschke [then the Packers' middle linebacker] and his quote made the wire services. It made me, too."

Tinglehoff also benefited inadvertently from Lombardi in another way. Earlier that year Lombardi had exiled Jim Ringo, the All-NFL center in previous seasons, to the Philadelphia Eagles because of a contract dispute. When it came time to select the All-NFL team in 1964, many voters forgot Ringo and remembered Lombardi's quote on Tinglehoff, who went on to be the All-NFL center for seven seasons. Perhaps some day Ringo or Tinglehoff or Jim Otto, once the annual All-AFL center with the Raiders, will be the first pure offensive center named to the Pro Football Hall of Fame.

Only five centers have been elected to the Canton, Ohio shrine—oldtimers Mel Hein, George Trafton, Clyde "Bulldog" Turner, Chuck Bednarik and Alex Wojciechowicz—but they are from the years before specialization; and each of these men also played defense.

If considered solely as centers, Jim Langer is probably better than any of those Hall of Famers. He's stronger, heavier, able to block bigger and quicker linemen and linebackers. "I never saw any of those centers except Bednarik," says Don Shula, "but I think everybody in the NFL acknowledges Jim Langer as the finest center ever to play the game."

Everybody except Jim Langer, who seems to be more aware of his loss of height from all the shots he has delivered with and taken on his helmeted head. "I used to be a little over 6-2," he says, "but now I measure a little under 6-2."



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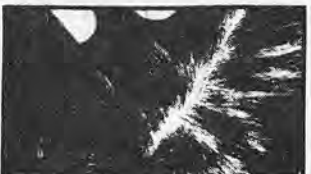
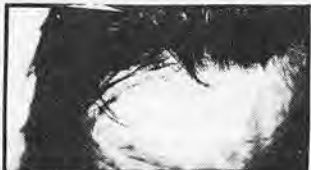
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The loneliness of the Suns' Good Humor Man



Walter Davis of the Phoenix Suns profoundly misses his family and friends in North Carolina, but that emotional loss didn't keep him from winning NBA Rookie-of-the-Year honors

By BOB WISCHNIA

It had been a short, bouncy flight home for the Phoenix Suns after a brief West Coast road swing. As soon as the plane landed, Walter Davis and his teammate, Alvin Scott, jogged through the terminal to the parking lot, tossed their luggage in Davis' car and drove off into the warm desert night.

After stopping at a convenience market to pick up a six-pack of Coors and some munchies, they decided to cruise downtown Phoenix, listen to a late-night jazz program on the radio and unwind a little before going home.

Earlier in the evening, Davis, the National Basketball Association's Rookie of the Year last season, had demonstrated he was going to be equally effective this year. He had routinely tossed in 30 points and was still buzzing and jiving about the game as they stopped at a red light in one of the sleaziest sections of Phoenix. An old clunker of a car, full of young blacks, pulled alongside and one of the occupants leaned out the window to check out Davis and his BMW bearing North Carolina license plates.

"Say, man," one of the dudes said, "you're Walter Davis, aren't you?"

Davis flashed back, "Sometimes," and sped off, only to be stopped a couple of hundred yards later by another red light.

The clunker pulled alongside again and the same guy leaned out his window. "Say, man, you're either him or you ain't. I know Walter Davis, so don't go lying to me. You him?"

"Sometimes I am, sometimes I'm not," Davis teased. "Sometimes I'm the Doctor, sometimes the Truck and sometimes I'm just me."

The next morning, at breakfast before a practice, Davis was replaying the tale of the night before for his two closest friends on the Suns, Don Buse and Mike Bratz. "So these guys kept following me and Alvin around," Davis said, "and finally we're at this stoplight and this guy gets out

of the car—and I'm thinking he's gonna kill me and Alvin—and he says, 'Walter, can I have your autograph, man?' I couldn't believe it. I dropped Alvin off about midnight and went home but couldn't sleep."

Buse and Bratz were barely awake and barely listening; Buse was buried in the horse-racing charts and Bratz was immersed in the box scores. Undaunted by their lack of interest, Davis continued: "So I get to sleep finally about 2 or 3, but all I'm having is nightmares. I'm dreaming they traded me to the Knicks. [Bob] McAdoo met me at the airport and said I could stay with him a few days till I got settled. It was so real I wanted to call Coach [John] MacLeod and ask him why he had to trade me. I wouldn't go. I didn't want to go."

Buse looked up from his charts and deadpanned: "Who'd we get for you?"

"Cash."

The dream had its roots in reality. Davis had heard that a few weeks before the season started the Los Angeles Lakers had offered any two of their forwards to the Suns for him. What Davis hadn't heard was Phoenix general manager Jerry Colangelo's reply: "We wouldn't take *all* their forwards for Walter."

A while later, as practice was about to start at the Phoenix Jewish Community Center, John MacLeod reaffirmed Colangelo's praise. "All summer, teams kept offering us big, rebounding forwards but it seemed like every team wanted Walter. I told them, and I'll tell you, I will not trade Walter Davis for any forward in basketball. Heck, let's make it easier. I wouldn't trade Walter for any player in basketball."

Davis, lying only a few feet away on a gym mat, overheard the coach. He ap-

Davis, here scoring over ex-Hawk Tony Robertson, lacks flashy moves, yet was able to average 24.2 ppg. last year.



Walter Davis

peared embarrassed. Trainer Joe Proski, who was examining Davis' knee, tried to loosen him up. "You'll never make this ballclub lying around," Proski said.

"Aw c'mon, Joe. Leave me alone this year. I'm no rookie."

"Yeah. But you gotta watch out or the sophomore jinx will get you."

Davis smiled. He is an emotional man, addicted to TV soap operas, assaulted by loneliness, driven to bad dreams because of rumors, stricken by tension before every ballgame. But he is honest in analyzing his emotions. And thoughts of a "sophomore jinx" do not bother him in the least.

The sophomore blahs have struck some recent Rookies of the Year. Davis' teammate, Alvan Adams, has never totally recaptured the flair that made him the league's top rookie in 1975-76. Ernie DiGregorio never even came close to the success of his freshman year (1973-74). But Davis shouldn't suffer the sophomore blahs that Adams and DiGregorio experienced. Davis' game is more complete, more accomplished and more consistent than any of theirs. As a rookie, he scored in double figures in every one of the 84 games—including playoffs and the All-Star Game—in which he played.

With the addition of Davis and guard Don Buse last season, the Suns, who the previous season had finished with a 34-48 record, had a 49-33 record in 1977-78, fourth-best in the league. Davis and shooting guard Paul Westphal, the Guns of the Suns, were the best 1-2 scoring punch in the NBA as they combined for an average 49.4 points a game. And Davis was the highest-scoring forward in the league with a 24.2 average.

"Sophomore jinx?" Davis laughed after practice as he walked to his condominium home across the street from the Jewish Center. "I was a college sophomore four years ago and had a pretty good year. This jinx thing is just something sportswriters write about. I'm a better player than last year; I'm stronger [he's gained five pounds], I'm playing better defense, I'm shooting with more confidence and my rebounding's getting better."

The 6-foot-6, 24-year-old from Pineville, N.C. was in a rush to get home in time to watch his favorite soap opera, *One Life To Live*. Davis spent much of his adolescence watching television with his mother, and the addiction persists. He appears to have seen every rotten rerun a dozen times, loves cartoons, talk shows and game shows and discusses inane soaps with the fervor of a bored housewife.

His condominium is in a predominantly Jewish neighborhood of North Phoenix and the development is referred to by the

other Suns as "Haifa West." His unit is sparsely furnished. A color television is the center of attention, but there is also a \$10,000 stereo and there are speakers in every room. There is a waterbed in one of the bedrooms but Davis says he doesn't feel rested when he sleeps on it, so until he gets new furniture, he is sleeping on the living-room floor.

A bachelor, he lives alone. "I love Phoenix," he said while fixing lunch after the soap opera, "but I'm lonely all the time here. I really miss my family and friends in North Carolina. I'm so used to having people around me all the time; I thought I'd grow out of it, but I still haven't adjusted to it. Sometimes at night I get feeling real bad about being so far from home. I'll call my family, my college coaches, my college teammates—Phil Ford or Mitch Kupchak—but it's not the same thing."

"Sometimes in Phoenix, I'll almost be looking forward to practice because at least I'll have someone to talk to. Buse and Mike Bratz live pretty close and we'll go out together, go to Turf Paradise [a horse track], play tennis for a case of beer or go to the health spa to kill an hour. But I don't do much else here except play ball, watch my soaps and listen to records. It's funny, but for me the hardest part with anyone is just getting to the talking part."

"I'm an 'up' person most of the time but I get a little down because I haven't found any close friends. Right now, I have to be pretty careful about the friends I do pick. Some people want to be friends just because I'm a basketball player. Guys will come up to me and ask if I ever shoot baskets."

"One guy came along one day to shoot baskets with me and he was an okay guy but I found out from someone else he was dealing drugs. I was really surprised so I just told him I had to stop shooting baskets 'cause Coach MacLeod didn't want us to."

"That's one thing about Walter," Don Buse said later, when told about the dealer, "he's such a trusting guy." Buse, a seven-year pro, is Davis' road roommate. "I've been around a lot of players and a lot of them let so-called stardom go straight to their heads. They think they're the only ones that matter. With all that Walter has accomplished so soon in his career, it would be very easy for him to be a real ass. But he's not. I've never met anyone who didn't like Walter. He treats people the same way he wants to be treated. But the thing I like most about him is he's a very emotional person who isn't afraid to show what he feels."

"I'm not sure this makes any sense,"

Davis, here driving by the Spurs' Larry Kenon, is too quick for other forwards to guard.



Alvan Adams said, "but in a way Walt's the quietest guy on the team and at the same time he's the most talkative. It took him a while before he'd open up, but about the time Curtis Perry got injured, Walt sort of took Curtis' place as the guy who keeps us loose. The Good Humor Man."

The Good Humor Man does a lot more than keep the Suns loose. Last year on the team's first road trip, Davis had a couple of 30-point outbursts and in one game in Philadelphia showed up Julius Erving with 35 points. When the Suns returned to the East Coast a couple of weeks later to play the New Jersey Nets, the Eastern press was waiting for Davis with questions about his chances—and those of Marques Johnson and Bernard King—to become Rookie of the Year.

Unaccustomed to the attention and uncomfortable with it, Davis bottomed out against the Nets and played his worst game of the year. King outscored him 44 to 14. After the game, the Suns boarded a chartered bus for a long, slow ride to Hartford, Conn., for a game against the Celtics.

"There was just so much talk around that time about Rookie of the Year," Davis recalled, "that I started to let the pressure get to me. I didn't care all that much if I won it or not but I knew it meant a lot to the team if I did win it. After Bernard King walked all over me, Buse and I had a long talk on the bus and we figured if I played my game and won it, fine. If I didn't, that would be okay, too."

The next night against the Celtics, Davis and Westphal teamed up for 83 points with Walter scoring 40. It was Davis' best game of the year and people began comparing him to such superstars as Erving, Havlicek and Elgin Baylor.

"I'm not sure all the comparisons were fair to Walter," Suns' assistant coach Al Bianchi said recently. "Here he was, just a rookie, and they're talking about him in the same breath with all-time greats. I coached Julius when he was a rookie at Virginia [of the ABA] and Julie, of course, is and was more spectacular. Walter has a little of that now but nothing like early Julius Erving. Walter's more fluid, runs better and probably has a better shot. Although he's a much less flamboyant player, Walter gets his points, and he just seems to get them effortlessly. You check the box score after the game and he's got 30 points and you've hardly noticed them. Compared to David Thompson or Julius Erving, Walter is a lot less conspicuous on the court. When David or Julie score, everyone in the building knows it."

"When Walter and Julie were matched up last season Walter outscored him 35-19 and 29-12. Julie had a helluva time staying with him. He couldn't do it. None of the forwards in the league can run with him. But the thing Walter does better than anyone else is dribble the ball upcourt—or fill a lane—get the ball and pull up, go straight up in the air and shoot his jumper. It's like a

layup for him. He's an automatic from 12 to 15 feet. He gives our ballclub a dimension very few teams have: a big, fast forward who can handle the ball like a guard and shoot with anybody. Is he the best forward in basketball? Name me someone better."

Walter Davis grew up in Pineville, N.C., the youngest of 13 children of Ed and Gertrude Davis. "It was easy growing up the baby in the family," Davis said over lunch in his Phoenix condo while another soap opera droned on in the background. "I was always protected and everybody looked after their baby brother. I got hit and beat on a lot by my brothers but it was okay. Three of my brothers—Hubert, Herbert and Harry—were pretty good basketball players and they taught me how to play. Even when I was too young to play, they'd take me along to games they played in Charlotte because I was someone they could trust to hold on to their coats and wallets. When I got older, they'd let me play but I didn't become a decent player until the tenth or 11th grade."

The summer between Davis' freshman and sophomore year in high school he was walking to a game barefoot when he stepped in a hole full of broken glass and severed his Achilles tendon. He was rushed to a hospital where a doctor said there was only a chance Walter would be able to play basketball again. The doctor emphasized he was not optimistic. Walter spent the entire summer in a cast watching television with his mother. When the cast came off, he was well enough to play.

As a senior at South Mecklenburg High in Pineville, Davis was the star of an undefeated team that won the state championship for the third year in a row. But, strangely, he was not heavily recruited. "I was all set to go to the University of Cincinnati until they changed coaches on me. But ever since I was old enough to know what a basketball was I wanted to go to North Carolina—Charlie Scott was my idol—but they never showed any interest in me. Then, one day near the end of the season, my coach told me to come down to his office; he said he had a surprise for me. So I go down there and he introduced me to Bill Guthridge, the North Carolina assistant coach. Coach Guthridge was driving this Carolina-blue Cadillac and had on a real nice Carolina-blue blazer and it really freaked me out. I told him I'd do anything to go there."

First, Davis had to spend a year in Delaware at Sanford Prep. "I could've gone to a lot of schools in the Atlantic Coast Conference but I wanted to go to Carolina. I probably could've gotten into Carolina with the grades I had but I wouldn't have been able to play basketball, so I figured I'd get my grades up."

At North Carolina, Davis majored in recreation and minored in last-second miracles. On a team dominated by future pros



Davis can relax in the pool at his apartment, but sometimes gets so lonely he calls fellow Carolina grad Phil Ford.

Bobby Jones, Mitch Kupchak and Tom LaGarde, they nevertheless went to the skinny freshman from Pineville when they needed a clutch hoop. The last game of Davis' freshman year was against North Carolina's archrival, Duke, and it was the kind of game legends spring from—at least around Chapel Hill. North Carolina was losing by eight points with 17 seconds left in the game. Somehow the margin was reduced to two with four seconds remaining. Duke muffed a one-and-one opportunity and North Carolina coach Dean Smith called time with three seconds showing and set up a play for his freshman forward. Davis got the ball at midcourt, took a single dribble and fired in a 40-footer at the buzzer. North Carolina won in overtime, and Davis still rates that game as the single greatest thrill of his life—not because he scored his collegiate high of 31 points, but, typically, because it was Bobby Jones' last home game as a Tar Heel and such an emotional victory.

"Walter subjugated his talents for the benefit of the team at North Carolina," says Tom LaGarde, who is a second-year pro with Seattle. "Whenever we needed a basket to tie or win a game, there was never any question that we were going to have Walter take the last shot. I remember one game we were playing in a Christmas tournament in Spain, against the Cuban national team, and we were behind by a point with one second left. We got the ball and someone threw it half the length of the court to Walter, and he just very casually swished it. But we came to expect him to do stuff like that. In my mind, he was always the best player on our team. But the greatest thing about Walter Davis—aside from being the nicest person in the world I've ever met—is that he is a winner. If you look at his record, you'll see what I mean."

The record shows that in Davis' four years at Chapel Hill, North Carolina won 98 games, lost 23, won two ACC tournaments, two regular-season ACC championships and was runner-up to Marquette

Walter Davis

for the national championship when Davis was a senior. He played in that championship game against Marquette with a broken finger on his shooting hand. He was named MVP of that UNC team and won the Patterson Medal—which is North Carolina's highest athletic honor. But still, North Carolina's most publicized players in Davis' years there were, first, Kupchak and, later, Phil Ford.

"There's always one player on every team who doesn't get much publicity," Davis said, clearing lunch from the table while keeping one eye on the television, "and I guess that guy was always me. The publicity I did get was as the underrated, unsung player on the team. . . . I was so well-known for being underrated, I was kind of overrated."

The Suns didn't think so. While coaching Virginia in the ABA, Bianchi had seen Davis play often enough to recognize a potential star. "Walter was a little tough to read because Dean Smith substitutes so freely and none of his players ever have great statistics," Jerry Colangelo says. "But if you saw Walter enough, you could see he was holding back some of his individual skills to play the passing game."

"What really sold me on Walter," Bianchi says, "was going down to Chapel Hill and just sitting around and talking with him for a day. From a character standpoint—and I don't mind saying this—Walter was head and shoulders above anybody else in the draft. Our program in Phoenix does not have any room for bad actors and so we decided the night before the draft that we would pick Walter no matter who else was available."

Davis was the fifth player selected in the 1977 draft, but he was disappointed because he wanted to play for Denver with Bobby Jones or for Washington with Kupchak. "The Suns were the team I knew the least about," Davis said. "Arizona just seemed like such a long way from home."

He wasn't anxious to sign and even less anxious to go to training camp in Prescott, Ariz. "The day Phil Ford drove me to the Raleigh-Durham Airport, I was really upset. It got so bad I told Phil that I didn't want to play if I had to leave. We just sat there crying and crying and I missed my plane to Phoenix. I knew I had to leave some time and get out in the real world, but I just couldn't do it. I wasn't afraid of playing in the pros, I wasn't afraid of the competition; I was just scared of being alone in a strange place. It was a very traumatic experience, but finally Phil convinced me I had to go."

The next day he made it to the Phoenix training camp, where he was anything but an immediate success. Nervous, homesick and somewhat out of shape, Walter watched from the bench as Ira Terrell

started ahead of him against Los Angeles in the first preseason game at Bakersfield, Cal. But when Terrell injured his knee, Davis quickly got his first taste of action.

"All I remember about that game was Coach MacLeod calling my name: 'Walter. Get in there.' I was really scared. It was the first time I had ever seen Kareem [Abdul-Jabbar] in person and, Jesus Christ, he was so big. Once I got going, I ran real hard, got some layups and started hitting on a few easy 15-footers. Pretty soon, Coach MacLeod was calling plays for me and I started feeling comfortable."

Bianchi became his guardian angel. "Walter's been sheltered his whole life and is a very sensitive kid," Bianchi says. "We learned very quickly that you can't yell or scream at him like you can with some players. He's a very coachable kid, but we have to handle him differently because he does get upset very easily."

A major factor in his immediate success in Phoenix—he averaged 20 points in his first 20 games—was joining a team that was ideally suited to his talent and temperament. "Coach MacLeod and Coach

Coach John MacLeod: "I wouldn't trade Walter for any player in basketball"

Bianchi are a lot more rah-rah, college-type coaches than Coach [Dean] Smith," Davis said. "We sort of have a college, family feeling."

Davis adjusted so well and so quickly to the Suns' system that by midseason the Rookie of the Year award had been practically conceded to him. He was the only rookie selected for the All-Star Game and, in a special poll of the players conducted by the New York Times, was second only to Maurice Lucas in the voting for top Western Division forward, outpolling Rick Barry and Bobby Jones.

In the Suns' final game before the All-Star break, Davis scored 30 points in a win at home against Milwaukee and caught a 2:30 a.m. flight to Atlanta to be there in time for a morning press conference. Artis Gilmore was the only other All-Star to show up for it, and when one of the writers asked Walter why he had gone to such trouble to be there early, Davis shrugged and said he assumed it was part of his job. Phoenix Gazette sportswriter Bob Crawford interrupted with a laugh, "C'mon, Walter. You know each one of these guys has a vote for Rookie of the Year."

After scoring ten points and getting six assists in 15 minutes of All-Star play, Davis drove back to Chapel Hill with Ford and Greg Miles, then the manager of the

Tar Heel basketball team. "I got home," Davis said, "and it was so nice to be back that I just couldn't leave after one day." Instead of rejoining the Suns for a scheduled practice, he practiced with the Tar Heels and deliberately skipped his flight to Phoenix. "I knew I'd get fined [he was—\$250] but it was worth it."

The one question Davis had to answer nearly every night last year—and every other night so far this year—is, of course, the standard: What's the difference between college and pro? His answer never varies: "There was no big difference except I get to shoot more with the Suns." Last autumn, as he was driving to a recording studio in Phoenix to tape some radio commercials, he said, "Every night some reporter will ask me that, but it's okay. I don't mind. There is a difference this year, though. The other teams are trying to be a little more physical."

Indeed. In an early season game against Golden State, the Warriors' coach, Al Attles, played five different forwards against Davis. Despite a typically slow first half—Davis gets so emotionally nervous before a game that he physically tires after four or five minutes and is the first player substituted for—Walter scored 35 points in only 29 minutes on a stunning display of twisting layups and 12- to 15-foot jump shots. Two nights later, against San Antonio, he had his usual miserable first half, hitting only one of nine shots, but came back to score 15 in the first five minutes of the third quarter.

The night after that, he starred against the Warriors once more in a game in Oakland. He scored ten points in the third quarter to get the Suns back in the game and, in the last five minutes, put the game out of reach with 12 points. He had 30 points in the victory.

At the small Phoenix recording studio, where Davis did his radio commercials, he had to read eight spots to be played around the state as part of a stereo sale. He kept blowing his lines and his soft, southern accent didn't sound clear enough for the recording engineer, who kept calling for take after take. Walter grew emotionally constricted; the more takes he tried, the tighter he became.

"Walt," the engineer suggested after Davis had blown one line repeatedly, "how about a joint . . . to loosen up?"

"Huh?"

"Y'know. A joint, man? Marijuana?"

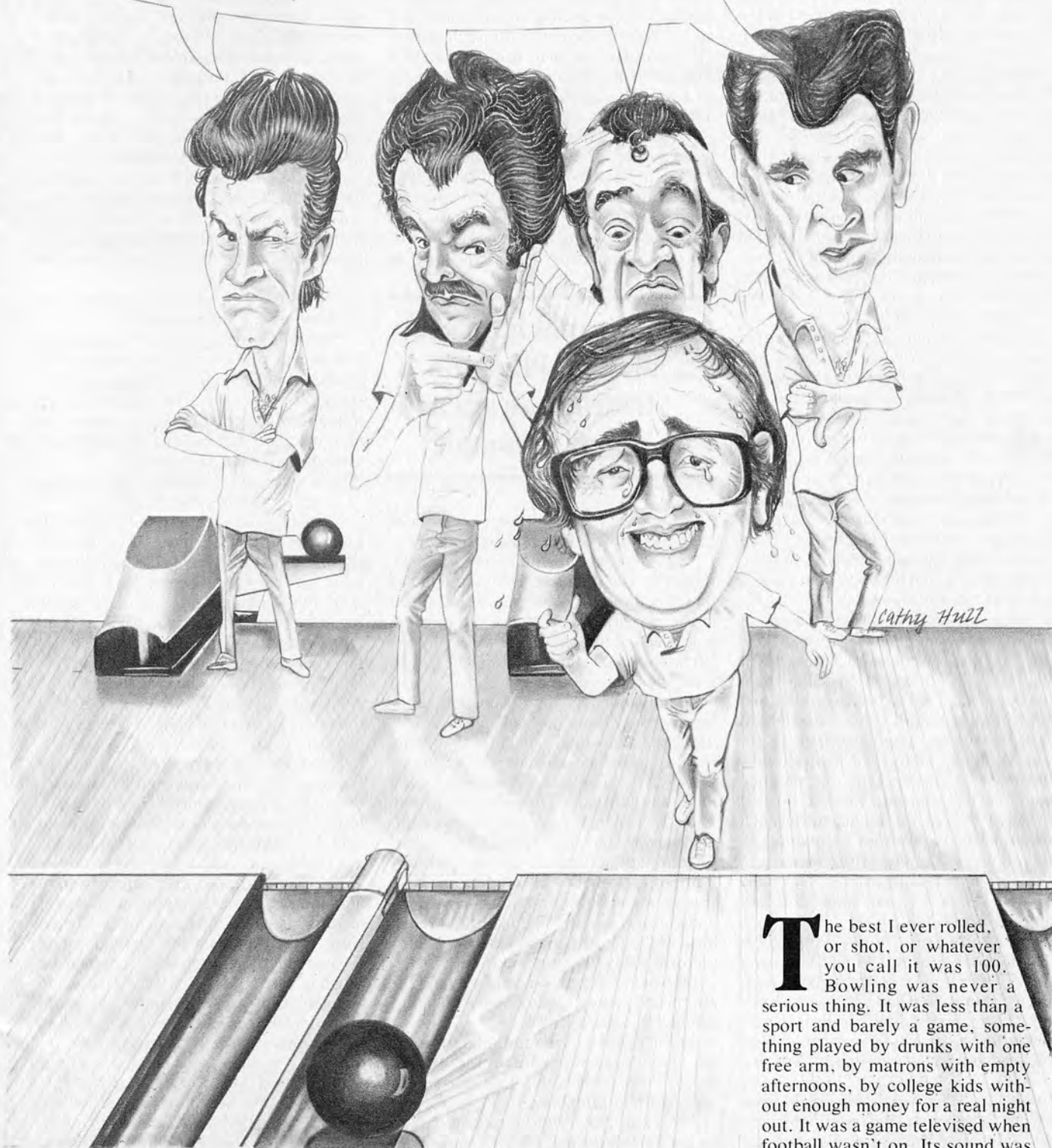
Davis, bewildered by even the thought, said, "Coach MacLeod, he wouldn't like it if I was flying around Phoenix like that. No, I don't think so. . . . I want to do this and I'm going to do it until I get this thing right."

He kept at it—his way. Unaided by intoxicants of any kind, Davis soon conquered his tension and "got it right." The route he chose, of course, was hardly a surprise. Walter Davis clearly is accustomed to confronting his own emotions. ■

**“Listen, buddy,
we don’t throw
gutter balls here”**

The trouble started when our ersatz bowler entered the U.S. Open tournament and the pros got a mite testy. Said one: “If I find that guy, it’s gonna be him and me”

By FRANKLIN ASHLEY



The best I ever rolled, or shot, or whatever you call it was 100. Bowling was never a serious thing. It was less than a sport and barely a game, something played by drunks with one free arm, by matrons with empty afternoons, by college kids without enough money for a real night out. It was a game televised when football wasn't on. Its sound was

Gutter Balls

as musical as the rhythm of an Akron assembly line.

I had never bowled at all except as a babysitting chore in Easley, S.C. I had used it as a diversion for my six-year-old brother-in-law, who liked hitting *things* and biting *me*. Not even the limited physical exertion of bowling attracted a non-athlete like me.

Then one day in March of 1978 I stepped up to the line in the practice round of the \$100,000 Bowling Proprietors Association of America (BPAA) U.S. Open in Greensboro, N.C., a legal illegal entry. The lights and the cameras flashed at my back. My teal-blue Adidas shirt was heavy with sweat. Nothing to it, I thought, as I prepared to throw a few balls. The first one shivered down the gutter and made a sound like it had struck a large empty drum. "Hey!" came a voice from the next lane. A slim figure in a magenta shirt glided over to me. In an archetypal New Jersey accent, he explained the problem. "Listen, buddy, this is the U.S. Open. We don't throw *gutter balls* here."

I thanked him and tried to get the proper approach. I also tried to look slim and magenta loving. I swung my arm, the ball sailed down the lane . . . and into the gutter again. *Whooma. Whooma.* Loud laughter behind me. I was in big trouble.

"Hold it," came a New York voice. "Keep your thumb toward your body."

I turned and saw one of bowling's slickest second-line stars, Johnny Petraglia, slipping on rose-tinted glasses as he approached me. Petraglia's hair shone like spun mahogany and his body consisted of more frame than flesh, nearly touching six feet but weighing less than 150 pounds.

A Staten Islander in his 30s, Petraglia's first recorded earnings as a pro, \$300, came in 1965, and these days he was a \$40,000-a-year man with his own Brunswick signature ball. Mustached and heavy-lidded, he magnetized the autograph-seeking children of Greensboro. Like most of the pros in this practice round, he had started on Lane 40 and worked his way to my end, trying out each lane. But I had stayed on Lane One the whole time to stay out of the way.

"Keep your thumb inside," Petraglia repeated. I nodded and slung the ball again. Five pins fell.

A noncommittal "Yeah," from Petraglia, who then said, "Mind if I throw a couple?" The pins went up like Nagasaki. When Johnny finished, he whispered, "Who are *you*, anyhow?" I said I was doing a story for *SPORT* and mumbled that my average was only 100, but not always.

John shook his head, his complexion glowing blue-white in the fluorescent light. "Man, why did they send somebody

like you?" Then he stepped off the lane before I could tell him more. Only three lanes away was Mark Roth, who had won a smidgen less than \$100,000 the year before. Bowling's other superstar, Earl Anthony, who had topped the \$100,000 total twice, was not at this tournament. But many of the second-line stars were here, the men who annually average between \$20- and \$30,000 in winnings on the Professional Bowlers Association tour.

By various Byzantine convolutions the BPAA had slipped me into this tournament. The 239 other entrants were either regulars on the pro tour or had pummeled and slammed their way through BPAA state tournaments to qualify for this \$100,000 competition. Embarrassed at my performance, I grabbed my ball and eased out the side door. I wanted a beer real bad.

The bowlers stayed at the Rodeway Inn. Once inside, I could have been in Des Moines or Seattle or Salinas or Dallas. The same tan rugs, the same Formica tabletops, the same scrambled eggs, the same red candles in fishnet holders in the bar, the same Emmylou Harris songs.

"They could have sent the real Plimpton. Instead, we got a phony Plimpton"

And beer. Tables of beer, pitchers of beer, wet circles of beer, signs for beer.

"Pass me by, if you're only passin' through," the song began as another quarter fell in the crack of silence. I saw myself in the mirror. Me and 50 of the bowlers who were staying here. All following the PBA rules that require that they be beardless, their hair above the collar. There were no women customers or groupies in the Rodeway Bar. Only sad men on a Sunday night. Bowling, I decide, is not the kind of sport that's made for fighting or loving. The appeal is the chance to win money and the outside hope of an hour on ABC-TV. There is no grassy playing field, no fresh air, no balletic leaping, no graceful pirouetting, no one-on-one physical confrontation. The bowler's gallery—though standing-room-only during tournament play—looks like a Little League bleacher, and the players wear only half a uniform, a bowling shirt and street pants.

I looked at the men around me, and the air turned heavy. "Hey, bartender," I called, "gimme a Bud."

Then I heard it. A mumble about "some guy down here screwing up the tournament." Two boys in Ban-Lon shirts were growling and grumbling.

"No, No, No," Blue Ban-Lon barked to Green Ban-Lon. "*SPORT* magazine,

not *Sports Illustrated*. They sent him to do a George Plimpton kind of act. You know, bowl with the pros?"

"Yeah, but Plimpton never played in the real thing," Green said. "It was all exhibitions. Not the *real* thing."

Blue took a swig from his glass. "Looks like they could of at least sent the real Plimpton. Instead, we got a *phony* Plimpton trying to do the *real* thing."

"It's gonna throw everybody's game off," Green said. "I'll bet he doesn't even know what double-jumping is."

He was right about that. Double-jumping was sure to cause me further embarrassment. In pro bowling, a pair of lanes must be open on each side of your own pair of lanes before you can make your approach. But there is no clue in the system that tells you it is your turn. The day before, I had asked Dick Battista, a lefty with a heart transplant, about double-jumping.

Battista, a red-faced native of Astoria in Queens, N.Y., and a former Johnny Carson propman, is constantly hustling the fact that he is the only 50-year-old athlete in the world with a 19-year-old heart inside him.

"Dick," I had asked, "how do you know when it's time to bowl?"

"Hey!" Battista yelled. "I got nothing to lose in talking to you. I got a heart could go out on me any minute. Make a hell of a story. You know what I mean? But listen, if you feel like it's your time to bowl, you step up there and *bowl*! Don't take any crap off anybody. Just bowl."

Still uncertain, I asked, "What if they . . . ah . . . say it's *their* turn?"

Battista's red face purpled. "Look! It *ain't* their turn! You know what I'm sayin'? When you decide it's your turn to bowl, you bowl. You know what I mean?"

I didn't understand, but now in the Rodeway Bar I was shaken loose from memory by Blue Ban-Lon's next line: "If I find that guy—it's gonna be him and me. Him and me! What's he look like? Hunh? Anybody seen him?" He looked around the room. "Let's find him!" The Ban-Lon brothers rose.

I was able to make it to the elevator because just outside the men's room they mistook the fatty reporter from the *Charlotte Observer* for me. As the doors hissed shut I heard someone say, "Damn! This ain't the guy."

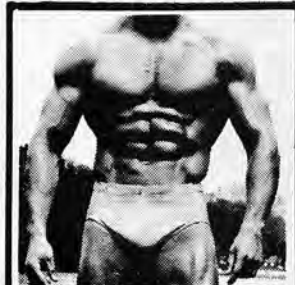
In my room among the clutter of empty aluminum cans and candy-bar wrappers, I looked at the tournament roster. There were three squads which would rotate throughout the tournament. I would be bowling with squad "C," along with Don Johnson, George Pappas and Mark Roth, all with averages well above 200. I could see the paper shake in my hand as I sought out my "partners." The first name I spotted was 'Jay Tartaglia' from 'Port Chester, N.Y.' Maybe he would tell me whether or not I should leave in the indigo night. I could slink back to my home in

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Columbia, change my phone number and get a mailbox downtown.

I found Tartaglia in his room not 20 paces from mine. He had black hair and a fat nose and was in his mid-20s. He looked like one of those guys in *Saturday Night Fever* who yells, "Hey, Tony! You ain't mad, are you?" Jay could not have weighed over 150 pounds. His roommate, Todd Strebel, also in our squad, was even smaller, about 5-9, 125 pounds. In 1977, Strebel had won \$5,375 on the pro tour. Tartaglia was not even listed in the program.

I explained my problem to the pair, suggesting I was a somewhat better writer than bowler. But I still thought that with a few tips, I might be able to glom enough bowling technique to avoid complete humiliation.

"How much did you say you bowl?" Strebel asked incredulously.

"A hundred. A hundred, but not always."

"No kidding?" Strebel said.

"No kidding."

Tartaglia smiled, his heavy eyebrows jerking up. "Hey. Hey, I got it. Maybe you could tell everybody you were in an accident. A car accident. And . . . and it damaged your—" He pointed at me.

"Your brain!" Strebel added. "You had brain damage."

Tartaglia fell back on the bed laughing. "Yeah, people'll feel sorry for you and sorta help you."

When I asked for quick pointers, Strebel snorted, "Everybody hits the pockets here. There ain't any tricks. You gotta come in here knowing how to do it. *Then* you work on shading your game."

"You'll probably set a world's record," Tartaglia said. "The farthest in the red of anybody."

I felt my heart vibrating. To be in the "red" meant the bowler was under 200 pins per game. A pro's score is computed on a card and projected on an overhead screen. If he's really cooking the score will be in black, but if he is rolling a mere 187, he would receive 13 big, fat RED numerals. Tartaglia speculated that I would probably end up with 850 to 900 in the red and I would be remembered *forever* for

it—a sort of "Wrong-Way Corrigan" of bowling.

I thanked both of them for their merciless candor and went back to my room to practice my approach. It was quite peculiar. I took five steps forward, then stopped dead like a spooked racehorse. I then let the ball go from a stationary position. From there the ball could easily spin into its natural path—the gutter.

I felt the cool surface of my ball, a black 16-pounder. It had been given to me by Dan Toma, the owner of Star Lanes bowling center in Columbia. Despite my 225-pound size, I had been more comfortable with a ten-pounder. But Toma insisted I take the 16-pound cannonball, the maximum weight allowed. It was a little like rolling an Oldsmobile, but I finally had become proficient enough to avoid splitting my thumb as I released the ball.

I went over my approach again and again without improvement, finally stumbling over to the bed. I lay down with my ball on the next pillow. Maybe *looking* at it could do something.

The phone call came near 2:30 a.m. as I lay there fully-clothed and semi-conscious.

"Frank," the voice whispered. "This is John. John Petraglia. Me and some of the boys wanna come down and talk to you."

I dumped the ball onto the rug and in less than two minutes heard the knock. I wished I had had some heat to wrap in a towel, maybe a Walther PPK.

"The boys" soon settled in my room. Slumping into a black vinyl chair was Everett Schofield, district manager of Brunswick, a 50ish man carrying a drink in his right hand. The tallest of the five visitors was the orange-haired Dave Davis, like Petraglia a veteran left-hander who regularly wins some \$40,000 a year on the tour. Standing next to Davis was Petraglia, who was staring at his feet.

Pacing the room, his eyes all pupils and fire, was George Pappas, the chairman of the tournament committee. Pappas, known as the "Mouth of the South" and one of the few top players to come out of Dixie, has earned slightly more than Petraglia and Davis over the last three years.

Sitting on the arm of another chair was Leroy Harrelson, the P.R. man representing Brunswick. Harrelson had cottony gray hair, a pink face and looked like he'd just been cleaned and pressed.

"Guess you know why we're here," Petraglia croaked.

I waited.

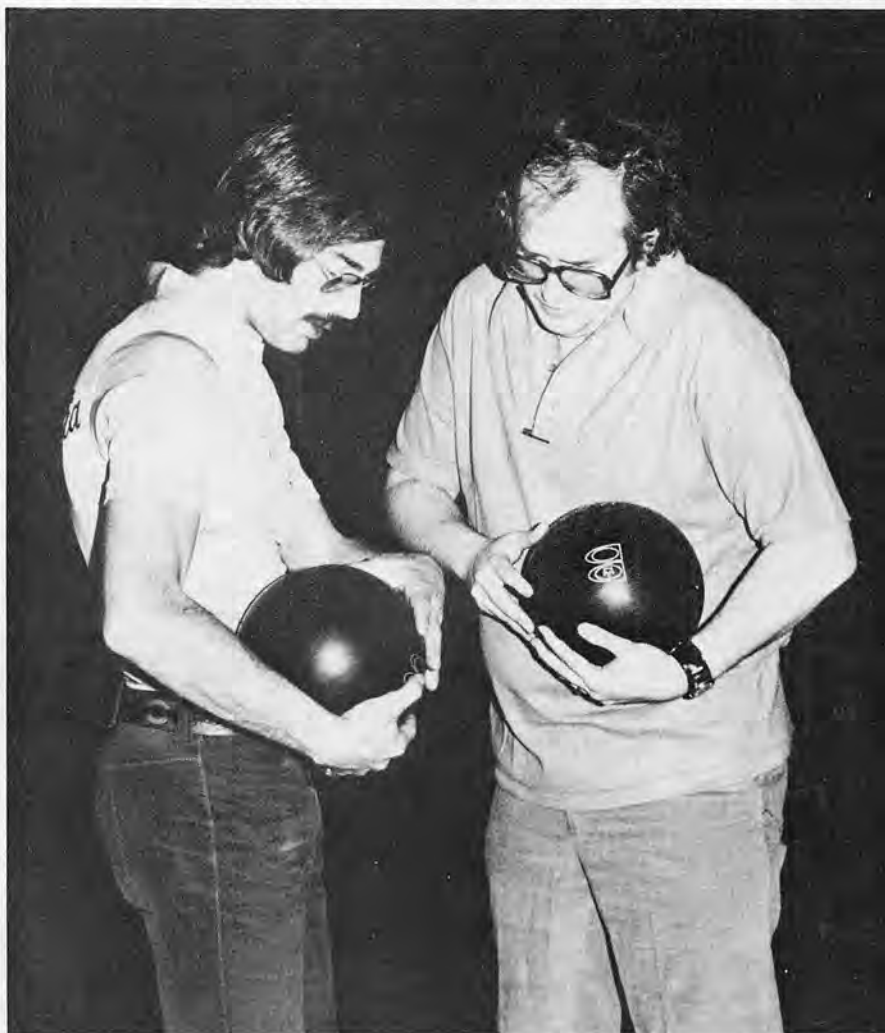
"I'll take it," Pappas cut in. He tried to smile. "The point is, Frank, everybody saw you bowl today."

"Yeah," I said. "I'm not too much of a bowler—"

"Yeah," Davis said, "that's why we're here."

Pappas held up his hand. "Look, we represent—we just met with 30 or 40 guys

Bowler John Petraglia (left) gives our author a crucial tip: "Keep your thumb inside."



downstairs and everybody says it. If you bowl—we're walking out. We're not gonna have a tournament."

The P.R. man waved his fingers and said, "Franklin is listening."

Then Pappas' mouth twitched. "Frank, you just can't do it. With you up there it's a damn farce."

Everett burped and shouted, "Frank!" slurring the "k" into an "h." "Goddammit, Frank, I can't let you bowl. I just can't let you goddamn bowl."

"He's got a right to bowl," Petraglia said.

"I can't let him do it, and that's that," Everett said.

Pappas scowled. "Everett, he's gotta right to bowl. The BPAA put him in. They're the ones at fault."

"Franklin understands this, fellows," the P.R. man said.

"I can't let him goddamn bowl," Everett said.

"Everett, lemme handle it!" Pappas yelled.

Davis said, "He's got a right to bowl."

Petraglia squatted down by the bed. "Look! Look Frank, we think bowling deserves a story. . . . But if you step in there, it cheapens the whole thing."

"Franklin hears you," P.R. announced. "He hears you."

"I almost punched out one of those bowlers downstairs, Frank!" Everett screamed. "Giving me some crap about you. None of his business. He's just a damn bowler. I'm not gonna take anything off him—"

"Hold it, Everett," Pappas snapped, then said to me: "The point is, you wouldn't compete against Arnold Palmer in the Masters or Staubach in the Super Bowl."

"That isn't my story. I might, though, if I got the chance."

Finally P.R. stood up. "Fellows, Franklin is a southern gentleman. He teaches at the University of South Carolina. He's a gentleman."

"Frank," Petraglia said, "bowling needs the story." His voice was gentle. "We want it. But a lot of the guys spent time, money, blood and a lot more to get here."

"Yeah," Davis said. "They're on the line for money."

"And they're afraid," Petraglia went on, "that you could affect their game if you stayed in."

"Frank," Pappas said, "I've never seen the bowlers so united about one thing: *You* not bowling."

I was furious and exuberant. I sat back on the bed and said, "I'm really pissed off that you guys came down here to my room at 2:30 in the morning like genteel wizards of the KKK and put the heat on. But—" I tried to look noble—"but I don't wanna hurt the tournament and cause everybody to walk out so—" I gave them a couple of seconds—"you can count me out." To be

honest, I was relieved.

Everett, who had been practically catatonic, jerked up and said, "You're a great American, Frank. A damn great American."

When the group shuffled out the door, Petraglia turned and shook my hand. "I want you to know," he said softly, "this is one of the most embarrassing moments of my life—and thanks."

I nodded and shut the door. They were right, of course. Bowling is a very serious business to professionals. What I had never seen before were the faces of those who gave so much of their lives to bowling, to the 40 one-inch strips of pine and maple, the cacophonous harmony of falling pins, the lonely nights on the road with the watered beer and country music. I understood some of their rage, their frustration at the exposure and wealth that flows to players of football, basketball, baseball, golf, tennis *et al.*

Half on the edge of sleep I yanked my memory back to yesterday morning's practice session. Larry Lichstein was in the backroom examining bowling balls to make certain they conformed to PBA standards of weight and material. An aging bowler with a head as shiny as his ball stepped up to the table.

Lichstein weighed his ball and said, "You got too much side weight with this one."

The bowler frowned and retrieved his ball. "Aw, Larry, I don't care. I probably won't cash anyway." He ambled out of the room.

Larry turned to me and raised an eyebrow. "That's a hell of an attitude, isn't it? But you can't blame him." He rubbed his hands together. "There are only about 50 of these guys who are worth a damn and only two of them make big money." He picked up a new sphere. "It's a downer for bowlers, you know. The Chicago Cubs pay Dave Kingman \$225,000 to bat .220. Roth, our best player, only made a hundred grand last year. Hell, Kingman couldn't carry Roth's bowling bag."

During practice that week Roth rarely failed to strike. He regularly fell into what is called "dead stroke," a sense of knowing that every ball he rolled would scatter ten pins. His concentration, timing and execution were precise, as could be expected from the 1977 PBA Bowler of the Year. Despite Roth's skills, though, the fact remained that few people outside the sport know him. That reminded me of something else Larry Lichstein had said about the current status of bowling: "Face it, Frank. There's champagne, there's liquor and there's beer. We're beer. And that may be all we'll ever be."

Now fully awake, I lay back wishing I had a Bud. I was glad I was out of the tournament and that the bowlers were competing as they should. In my separation from them, I suddenly felt close to all those bowlers.

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SPORT QUIZ ANSWERS from page 10

1—b. 2—Billy Cannon, Mike Garrett, Roger Staubach, Tony Dorsett. 3—c (none). 4—False, there has never been a kickoff punt returned for a TD in a Super Bowl game. 5—a-3, b-4, c-1, d-2. 6—b (seven in 1976). 7—a (nine in 1974). 8—a (11). 9—Penn State, (Orange, Cotton, Sugar, Gator, Fiesta). 10—a (the Cotton Bowl, six times from 1969-1974). 11—a, 1971. 12—c. 13—b. 14—d. 15—a. 16—b (2.47 with the Giants in 1958). 17—a-3, b-1, c-4, d-2. 18—a (71 on Nov. 15, 1960). 19—b. 20—c.

Photo Credits

Dan Bialotti/Movement Concepts—14 (bottom). Ruffin Beckwith—88. Martin Blumenthal—10 (left). Joe DiMaggio—60 (background). Kevin Fitzgerald—14 (top). Curt Gunther/Camera 5—60 (bottom right inset). Steve Harris—26, 27. Nancy Hogue—18. Dwight Johnson—54 (top). Fred Kaplan—16 (2). Bob Kingsbury/Focus Productions—83, 84, 85. Jack Mecca—60 (bottom middle insets). Tony Neste—60 (bottom left inset). Darryl Norenberg—71, 72. Rich Pilling—10 (middle and right), 13 (bottom right 2). Mitchell Reibel/Focus on Sports—86 (2). Hy Simon—13 (top right), 63. Carl Skalak Jr./Opticom—23 (2), 32 (bottom), 33. Tony Tomsic—22, 32 (top). Peter Travers—8, 82. UPI—54 (bottom), 68, 92. Jerry Wachter—36 (left), 36-37.

SPORT TALK

Continued from page 8

things are going now, I may have been the last one left. I hope Sullivan's happy."

—Mark Ribowsky

FILLING IN HOLES

Some guys just have a knack for doing things other people can't do. Take Norman L. Manley, a 55-year-old former aircraft engineer who runs the projector in a Long Beach, Cal. movie house. His knack—which is neither aircraft engineering or movie projecting—is golf. Nobody in the world can make holes-in-one more frequently than Norman Manley.

Manley's incredible golfing knack—a total of 40 aces as of last October—has tied him with PGA tour veteran Art Wall Jr. in the *Guinness Book of Records* for the most holes-in-one anyone has ever made. What's most amazing is that you can't even accuse him of playing a great game of golf most of the time.

"I'm a two-handicap... or rather, I was a while ago, because I've had a bum knee lately and it's stopped me from getting to golf courses, or even across the street," Manley said from his Long Beach home shortly after notching his 40th hole-in-one at the Kapalua Golf Club in Maui, Hawaii

last September. "At one time I thought I could turn pro, but I couldn't because of my financial situation—not to mention my putting. I'm no duffer, but I really only play for recreation. Unfortunately, I can only play a couple of times a week now. Hell, my 40th hole-in-one came while I was on vacation."

Regardless of how often or how well Manley plays, the one constant in his game is the ace. Manley hit his first in 1952 at the Willowick Country Club in Santa Ana and he hasn't stopped since. He nailed six in 1972, nine in '74, and, in what could be a one-day performance unequaled in sports history, sank two on consecutive holes at the then-Del Valle C.C. in Saugus, Cal. on Sept. 2, 1964—a prodigious act under any circumstances, but staggering considering that both holes were par 4s. Manley has five aces on that course (now named Hasley Canyon)—three on the 330-yard, par-4 seventh hole. His knack for aces is such that when he hit No. 40, he did it on a windswept day on a course he'd never seen before and with clubs he'd never used before.

Manley's secret? "I don't have one, other than the fact that I don't aim for the pin like most golfers, I just aim for the green," he says. "It's all luck... on one of my aces the ball got wrapped in the flag and dropped straight down into the hole. That's why I consider the eight double-eagles I've made on par 5s a much greater

achievement. That takes real skill.

"But it helps to be able to give the ball a good ride. Most people think the good ace holes are the shorties, the 130-yarders you punch down a hill. But those holes give me hell. I'll take a 6- or 7-iron on a long par 3 and knock the ball a good 185 to 200 yards. On the first of those two in a row I made on the par 4s, I needed 270 yards on the fly over a hill. The second one was a 4-wood into a breeze and drawn around a dogleg. I didn't see either one go in."

Since few people do see his drives go in—at Kapalua, the audience was his wife and her girlfriend—Manley says he gets signatures from all witnesses, including caddies and groundskeepers. "I have to," he says. "I tell people what I've done and they say, 'Yeah, sure.'" But when the Guinness people thoroughly checked out all of Manley's aces, they found them to be on the level.

However blasé Manley has become about his knack, ace No. 40, on Kapalua's par-3, 185-yard 17th hole, was one of his biggest thrills. "A tough hole," Manley said, "you have to draw the ball in across the ocean, and the wind that day was swirling like mad. I used a 6-iron. Seeing the ball go in was one breathtaking sight."

"Knowing my name will go down in history for something is good enough," he added with a laugh. "That's not too bad for an old two-handicapper, is it?"

—M. R.

CONDITIONS AND COMMENTS

Al McGuire, the former Marquette coach, made a startling prediction at an NBC-TV press conference to announce his signing a multiyear contract to be a color man for the network's NCAA and Olympic basketball coverage. "I don't think our basketball team will win the '80

Olympics," McGuire said. "The star concept we use won't work anymore. We won the last one because Dean Smith [the North Carolina coach who handled the Olympic team] selected mainly players from the Atlantic Coast Conference. Dean said they were smarter." The pixieish McGuire paused and smiled at his au-

dience. "That's why half of them bronzed their gold medals."

When the laughter cleared, McGuire concluded: "But, seriously, I think team basketball is what wins today, and that's what the international teams play. No stars. That's why we'll have a hard time winning."

ASK BILL LEE

Boston Red Sox pitcher Bill Lee responds to this month's question: *Rumor has it that you won't be playing for Boston next season. Have you prepared yourself for the possibility of being traded during the off-season?*

"I started preparing myself in 1971. But I wouldn't like to be traded. Deep down inside, I don't think the team minds me criticizing it, because I constructively criticize it. I propose solutions to the problems to make things better for the fans, the city of Boston and baseball—which supersedes everything else. If I were traded, I think a majority of fans would physically lift up the ballpark and shake it and try to find out why it rattles."

Send your questions to Bill Lee in care of SPORT, 641 Lexington Ave., New York, N.Y. 10022. We'll print more of his answers next month.



Former coach Al McGuire claims the U.S. basketball team won't win the '80 Olympics.

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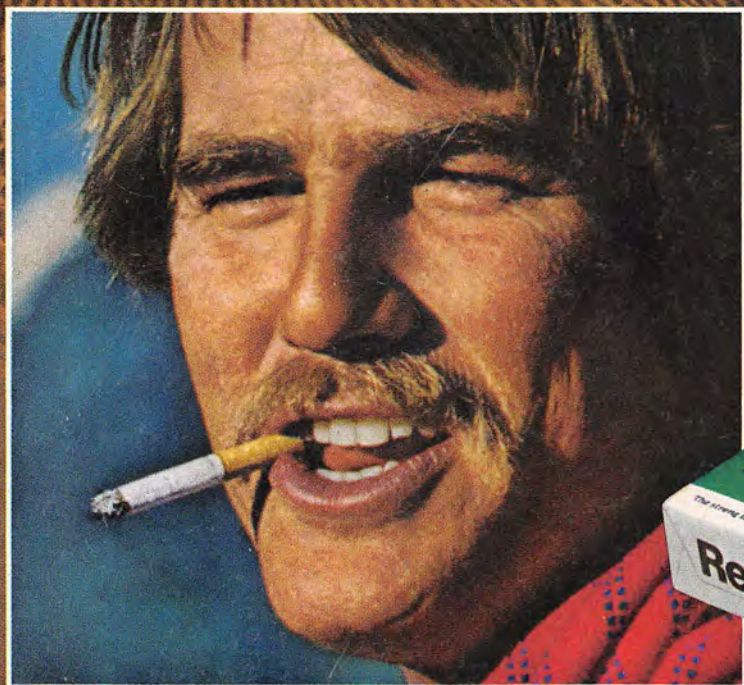
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